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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

37<sup>th</sup> meeting  
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**Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for  
Protected Areas**

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**ANNUAL REPORTS 2016:  
COMPILATION OF  
ANNUAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY  
THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AREAS**

*Document prepared by the Directorate  
of Democratic Governance*

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### 1. ARMENIA – KHOSROV FOREST STATE RESERVE

**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. Reserve managers take steps to ensure that the existing water resources facilities do not expand within the area and remain completely compatible with the preservation of the European interest of the area
2. Public motor transport traffic, including the transportation of tourists is strictly forbidden within the area and takes place only by the existing pedestrian natural trails, the movement of the transport is carried out only for management purposes and in case of emergencies.

**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. Appropriate efforts are carried out by the managers to protect the reserve and prevent from illegal activities. As a consequence during the period from 2015 to 2016 in the state reserve any illegal activities such as poaching and violations of reserve regime were not registered.
2. Funds provided by the state budget and non-budget are fully allocated.
3. The Term of Management Plan of the “Khosrov Forest” State Reserve” SNCO for 2010-2014 confirmed by the Government Decision of RA N N-500 dated 23.04.2009 has expired. Caucasus Nature Fond inform that a team headed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Armenia has been selected and will begin this year.

**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.

There are 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.

There were no changes of the boundaries.

**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.

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

The reserve is located at the altitude of 900-2400 m above sea level spreading from semi-deserts to the upper limit of forest zone. Subalpine meadows and rocky slopes located above this limit and serving as habitat for wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*) and moufflon (*Ovis ammon gmelinii*), unfortunately, are not included in the territory of the reserve.

"Khosrov Forest" state reserve is one the oldest protected areas in the world having a history of about 1700 years. The reserve preserves ancient cultural amenities, historical-architectural monuments, unique

plant and animal species, splendid diversity of scenic landscapes. It was founded in 334-338 by the order of Armenian King Khosrov Kotak to improve the natural-climatic conditions of adjacent territories of Artashat city -the capital of Armenia of the given period and the newly established Dvin city to ensure conservation and enrichment of flora and fauna species; serve as a ground for royal hunting, military exercises and entertainments.

In September of 1958 the Government of Armenia adopted a decision to declare Khosrov forest as reserve zones. It was created to conserve and improve the unique flora and fauna.

The landscape variety of “Khosrov Forest” state reserve is due to the difficult mountainous relief, steep zoning and peculiarities of soil-climate conditions. They form landscape types from semi-desert to mountainous and alpine meadows.

The reserve area is rich in unique natural ecosystems that are mainly due to inaccessibility and absence of paths and roads.

The reserve is distinguished with its plant species, including abundance of rare and endangered species that are due to soil climate conditions and relief diversity of the area.

### **Flora**

1849 species of vascular plants grow in the reserve area; they are represented in 588 genera and consist of 107 families. More than 80 plant species are involved in the Red Data Book of Armenia 1989 .

25 plant species and 6 species of mushroom are involved in the new Red Data Book of Armenia published in 2011. There are 24 endemic species.

### **Fauna**

There are more than 1500 Invertebrate and 283 vertebrate species in Khosrov reserve.

28 vertebrate animal species included in the Red Book of RA 1989.

35 vertebrate animal species and 31 invertebrate species are involved in the new Red Data Book of Armenia published in 2011.

**Historical-architectural monuments:** Havuts-Tar Monastery (11-13th centuries), stone arch-bridge across the Azat River (12th century), cross-stones

"Khosrov Forest" state reserve is the reserve of national and historic significance. It is the oldest preserved flora and fauna museum in Armenia.

In “Khosrov Forest” state reserve there are Kakavaberd, Havuts Tar and Aghjots vank monastic complexes, Kakavaberd, Sakraberd fort - castles, Blrashen, Yelija, Bayburd, big and small Gilans, Avanik, Vanstan (Imirzik /Imirzek) Berdatak, Avanik, Hand , Khosrov, Zimmi, Jghin, Mankuk, Spitakavank and other places that used to be villages, three-dozen churches, several hundred khatchkars /cross-stones and gravestones, medieval bridge and other historical monuments, that are silent witnesses of the past.

The cozy corners of "Khosrov Forest “ state reserve keep the first human cultural development imprints (engraved rock images, traces of ancient civilization, archaeological monuments and sites of historic and cultural great value) that can make ecotourism impressions unforgettable and give wide opportunities for the ecotourism development in the given area.

There are 2 visitor centres in “Khosrov Forest” State Reserve.

The following trails are available for the visitors:

**Trail N 1 – Garni and Kakavaberd districts, Havuts Tar**

**Trail N 2 – Kakavaberd district, Vanstan**

**Trail N 3 – Kakavaberd district, Kakavaberd**

**Trail N 4 – Khosrov district, Trchnaberd**

**Trail N 5 – Khachadzor district, Mankuk**

## **8. Education and scientific interest**

1. The explanatory and eco-educational activities were developed and are carried out in the neighboring communities of the reserve by the employees of the reserve. The investigative visits are organized to the reserve museum and its area for schoolchildren of the neighboring communities. During 2016 student groups and 550 visitors have visited the museum of the state reserve and 635 visitors have visited the state reserve .
2. There are 5 eco-touristic routes that are approved by the reserve management plan. The first 3 routes include attractions of Garni, Kakavaberd areas, the other two-Khosrov and Khachadzor areas. Groups taking eco-touristic tours have to consist of not more than 10 people and have to move by pedestrian trails or by horses. The entrance to the reserve has to be allowed by the authorized or executive body.

### 8.2. Scientific research

#### **Information on WWF-Armenia activities linked to <<Khosrov Forest>> State Reserve**

During 2016 WWF-Armenia has been doing monitoring of biodiversity in the Khosrov Forest State Reserve with installation of camera-traps in the main habitats of leopard, bezoar goat, lynx, bear and other species in Kaqavaberd, Khosrov and Khachadzor districts of the reserve. Field monitoring includes stock-taking of target species by the staff of WWF-Armenia in cooperation with the reserve field rangers. Except mammals, the monitoring includes raptors, such as black vulture, Egyptian vulture, lammergeyer, gold eagle and European griffon. The data are processed in WWF- Armenia as well as stored in the reserve.

Since November 2016 the monitoring of juniper and bezoar goat will be done during 2017-2018 by the CNF funding in close partnership with the specialists-scientists in respective fields.

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

1. As the area included in the Emerald network of Armenia, habitat and species inventory and mapping works were carried out according to the Res. 6 and Res. 7. According to the management and annual working plans scientific works are being implemented in the reserve. The complete examination works of Flora and Fauna species as well as habitats will be done during the development of the new management plan.

#### **2. List of species found on the site and included in Resolution 6 and habitats included in Resolution 4**

**Invertebrates:** Cerambyx cerdo

**Reptiles:** Testudo graeca, Mauremys caspica

**Birds:** Accipiter brevipes, Aegolius funereus, Aegyptius monachus, Alcedo atthis, Anthus campestris, Aquila chrysaetos, Aquila pomarina, Bubo bubo, Bucanetes githagineus, Buteo rufinus, Calandrella brachydactyla, Caprimulgus europaeus, Circaetus gallicus, Coracias garrulus, Dendrocopos syriacus, Emberiza hortulana, Falco biarmicus, Falco peregrinus, Gypaetus barbatus, Gyps fulvus, Hieraaetus pennatus, Lanius collurio, Lanius minor, Lullula arborea, Luscinia svecica, Neophron percnopterus, Pernis apivorus, Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax, Sylvia nisoria.

**Mammals:** *Canis lupus*, *Capra aegagrus*, *Lutra lutra*, *Myotis emarginatus*, *Panthera pardus*, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, *Ursus arctos*, *Vormela peregusna*, *Myotis blythii*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *Miniopterus schreibersi*.

**Habitats:** E1.2-Perennial calcareous grassland and basic steppes; E1.3-Mediterranean xeric grassland; E3.4-Moist or wet eutrophic and mesotrophic grassland; F9.3-Southern riparian galleries and thickets; G1.11-Riverine *Salix* woodland; G1.A7-Mixed deciduous woodland of the Black and Caspian Seas; G3.9-Coniferous woodland dominated by Cupressaceae or Taxaceae.

**3. Together with the above-mentioned species the following flora and fauna species of national importance are also widespread on the site.**

**Plants:** *Allium schchianae*, *Astragalus holophyllus*, *Centaurea arvensis*, *Polygala urartu*, *Pyrus chosrovica*

**Invertebrates:** *Agrilus araxenus*, *Hyles hyppophaea*, *Miarus armenus*, *Onthophagus diversicornis*, *Papilio alexanor*, *Proserpinus proserpina*, *Sphenoptera geghardica*

Amphibians and **Reptiles:** *Vipera (Pelias) eriwanensis*.

**4. The assessment of the climate change possible impact on the “Khosrov forest” State reserve**

Climate change risk assessment activities for “Emerald Network” including “Khosrov forest” sites were carried out by the support of UN Convention on Climate Change.

A deterioration of the forest vegetation growing conditions can be expected. The specific forest ecosystems will stay the same in the middle mountain belt, while in the lower mountain belt they will transfer into sparse forests. Overall, the natural forest growth will be hampered.

Especially in the middle mountain belt, the steppe vegetation of the reserve area will start to transfer into phryganoids. A significant expansion of tragacanth steppes and traganths is possible. Juniper and deciduous arid open forests will rather stay within the old borders. A bigger expansion of open arid forests is possible due to the forest vegetation of the lower belt. The upper border of the forest probably will rise to the sub-alpine belt (an expansion of sub-alpine forests is possible); while the meadows situated in the border of the reserve will start to transfer into meadow-steppes. The presumed changes of ecosystems will lead to the conservation and improvement of Bezoar goat’s natural habitats, and also to the occupation of new sites and expansion of their local area within the reserve area. Most likely, the existence conditions of Transcaucasian water shrew (*Neomys schelkovnikovi*) will improve, which will lead to the increase of the population rate. A fragmentation of the local area of porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) may be expected, and out of their current migration reserve area, in best case, in the separate parts of the reserve small groups of this species will remain. The existence conditions of the mouflons, which do not have permanent habitats here and are considered as a seasonal migrant during recent years, will get significantly worse. It is possible, that already in 2007 the reserve area will not be included in his area. The existence conditions of long-eared hedgehog (*Hemiechinus auritus*), marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) will noticeably improve, which will lead to the increase of their populations and the extension of their areal. There will not be any significant changes in the populations of Caspian snowcock (*Tetraogallus caspius*). The climate change also will not have noticeable impact on the populations of *Panthera pardus*. For *Cerambyx cerdo* of the invertebrates the living conditions can be expected to have some improvements. Related to the rise and the change of species of the forest lower border, a deterioration of the growing conditions is expected for those tree species (oak) that are considered as a main food. Consequently, the number of weak and semi-dry trees will increase, which will lead to the additional microhabitats for the development of the *Cerambyx cerdo*.

**5. Published <<The Emerald book of Republic of Armenia >>**



The book is dedicated to the coverage of activities towards the formation of potential ASCIs of the Republic of Armenia-“Emerald Network”- “the Joint Programme between the Council of Europe/European Union within the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979). This book contains legal basis for the establishment of “Emerald Network”, its formation process and outcomes of implemented works in Armenia. Organizational, legal and methodological bases of “Emerald Network” creation are represented, an essential contribution towards the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on Biological diversity was covered as well. The book mainly contains information on the sites included in the network, species and habitats included in the Annexes of the Bern Convention, Resolution N4 and N 6, as well as information on the activities carried out within the projects “Emerald Network in Armenia” 2009-2011 and “the Joint Programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe for the Prepatatton of the Emerald Network of Nature Protection Sites, Phase II, 2013”. The book is intended for the workers of environmental area, including mostly territorial environmental departments, territorial administrative spheres that will support and deal with the management and monitoring of sites included in the Network.

## **2. AUSTRIA – KRIMML WATERFALLS NATURAL SITE**

### **1. Conditions:**

No conditions
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### **2. Recommendations:**

<p>1. Review and where necessary improve the regulations of the protected area in order to strengthen the protection status; and devote a part of the management plan of the HTNP to the Krimml Waterfalls:</p>
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The elaboration of the management plan for the National Park Hohe Tauern is going on. The Krimml Waterfalls will be integrated according their rank.

<p>2. Continue to take appropriate measures in order to preserve the natural beauty of this impressive natural monument for future generations:</p>
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Is implemented on an ongoing.

<p>3. Avoid impacts on the high aesthetic quality of the landscape surrounding the Krimml Falls, especially in the areas around “Wasserfallboden” and “Schönangerl”:</p>
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Is implemented on an ongoing. In all of nature conservation law administrative procedures, which take place in the surroundings to the Krimml Waterfalls, always takes a rigorous examination of the potential impact on the natural monument.

<p>4. Maintain great vigilance regarding the development close to the falls, e.g. installations or extension of shops, as well as medical care and new touristic activities (e.g. ice-climbing);</p>
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Is implemented on an ongoing. In all of nature conservation law administrative procedures, which take place in the surrounding area to the Krimml Waterfalls, always takes a rigorous examination of the potential impact on the natural monument.

<p>5. Avoid as fa as possible increasing light pollution:</p>
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Currently there are no efforts.

<p>6. Continue to pay close attention of the problem of path erosion; and ensure that visitors only use the existing paths;</p>
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The general maintenance work on the footpath implemented and the balustrades was renovated by the Austrian Alpine Association. This work will be implemented with great care on the landscape for the

safety of visitors and for the visitor management. Individual parts of the footpaths and their abbreviations have been dismantled, fenced and revegetated.

7. Pursue scientific research and secure funding for studies on regional birdlife, fungi (including lichens) and bryophytes, as a contribution to protect the area's typical biodiversity:

The area of Krimml Waterfalls and the Krimml Valley are included in some scientific research projects of the Hohe Tauern National Park e.g. lichens project. In the Scientific Publications of the Hohe Tauern National Park, a popular science publication to the lichens was published this year. In it is pointed out again and again the special biodiversity of the lichens at the Krimml Waterfalls.

This year has been given a scientific survey of ferns in the area of the Krimml Waterfalls. The field recordings took place during the summer. The completion is planned by end of December 2016. This study will demonstrate again that the Krimml waterfalls are a hotspot of biodiversity. In fall a training assessment for the Ranger of Hohe Tauern National Park took place.



8. Strengthen the cooperation with local stakeholders, especially land owners, the municipality, the Austrian Alpine Association (ÖAV), tourism operators and associations.

The cooperation is very well maintained with the Austrian Alpine Association, the land owners, the community and the tourist office and there is a good agreement.

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

### **3. Site Management:**

No changes

### **4. Boundaries:**

No changes

### **5. Other information:**

#### **Visitor Management**

The amount of visitors has diminished from 700.000 in 1992 to 348.623 in 2008. This year the visitor number increased fortunately slightly with 390.726. Most of the visitors come between June and September and spend only one day in this site. The means of transport used for visiting the region are mainly private cars, followed by buses and train. For years the arrival is forced by public transport. This

year the new Nationalpark Sommercard Mobil was released. To be able to enjoy and sample the region and its variety-packed offer, there was two new all-inclusive tickets available from 1st May to 31st October 2016. All people holidaying in the region who are spending the night in a hotel, private lodging or holiday apartment or on a farm had the chance with this card to choose from 60 attractions and avail of additional discounts. One of the benefits of the new Nationalpark Sommercard was the visit of the Krimml waterfalls and the Krimml worlds of Water and the free use of the local Pinzgau railway and all Salzburg Verkehr Postbuses (see attachment). This new offer on the visit of the Krimml Waterfalls and the use of public transport was very well received.

The Krimml Waterfalls are an important excursion destination of the Austrian schools and a starting point of their field trips into the Hohe Tauern National Park. Many visitors had taken part in the excursions guided by the well-trained Rangers of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

In the course of several PR activities for the National Park Hohe Tauern and the Krimml Valley film and photo shoots or insertions of the Krimml Waterfalls were made.

## **6. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

The award of the European Diploma is not only honourable, but it is also a challenge for the conservationists to meet the demands of protection in a responsible way. This year we could preserve the nature and the landscape of the Krimml Waterfalls. The policies of the Hohe Tauern National Park and of the government of Land Salzburg adhere strongly to the idea of the protection of the Krimml Waterfalls. These interventions were warded off only based on the regulations of the European Diploma! Extremely keen standards are being applied to all matters connected with the Krimml Waterfalls and their protected surroundings. The award of the European Diploma to the Krimml Waterfalls has made the falls and the National Park well known throughout the world. This fact has been appreciated by the National Park Administration in many publications and conferences.

## **3. AUSTRIA – THAYATAL NATIONAL PARK**

**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.

There are no conditions attached to the award or to the renewal of the European Diploma.

**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. as soon as the results of the study on the ecology of the Thaya River and how it is affected by the Vranov Dam operations are received, the Thayatal National Park, as well as the Podyji National Park in the Czech Republic, should undertake to translate the proposed measures into action. The ideal flow rate of 2.4 cubic metres per second already set by the Czech experts must be achieved;*

As Podyjí National Park reported last year the operator of hydroelectric power station in Vranov and Podyjí National Park administration signed an agreement on flow regime in river Thaya (Dyje). We mentioned in our report that the minimal flow is set at 2.8 m<sup>3</sup>/sec. There are two hydrological monitoring points downstream the Vranov Dam which are recording the flow rates.

The Thayatal National Park administration and the Podyjí National Park administration are taking part at the INTERREG V project Dyje/Thaya 2020, which has started in May 2016. Leadpartner of the project is

the Czech river administration Povodí Moravy. One main topic is the improvement of the ecology of Thaya river.

*2. in view of the four or five artificial sills across the Thaya, consider renaturalisation work to recreate rocky rapids over a longer stretch of the river. In terms of priority, the sill immediately upstream is most in need of improvement;*

In the project Dyje/Thaya 2020 the leadpartner Povodí Moravy will build a fish pass at the sill in Podhradi. They will survey the success of this measure. The results will be used for a concept for restoration of free fish migration in the Thaya river.

*3. ensure that transfrontier projects and activities involving both the Thayatal and Podyji National Parks are increasing in scope and are well funded and intensified, particularly with a view to taking essential measures on the impact of the Vranov Dam;*

In the project Dyje/Thaya 2020 we also want to establish a transboundary spawning ground for the Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta fario*) in the Thaya river to improve the natural reproduction. Additionally, measures against sediment deposition due to soil erosion from agricultural areas shall be evaluated.

The INTERREG project „Connecting Nature AT-CZ“ was applied for in September. Again, the planned studies are to be conducted in both national parks. Thayatal National Park will draft a map of the woodland vegetation of both parks and evaluate a project for Wildcat (*Felis silvestris silvestris*) population support. Podyjí National Park will investigate the distribution of vascular plants and fungi and conduct further research in the areas of forest structure and woodland ecology. Beside NP Thayatal and NP Podyjí there are nine other organisations from Czech and Austria taking part in this project. The Thayatal National Park administration is the leadpartner.

*4. given the spontaneous establishment in the park of new species such as the otter and beaver and the current study on the wild cat, there is a need to document the presence of roving animals as fully as possible and consider the full potential of the park's habitats;*

Within the INTERREG Central Europe project “Magic Landscapes” the Thayatal National Park will run a project for a Wildcat Corridor Plan for the Austrian Waldviertel, Weinviertel and the south of Czech. The wildcat corridor plan will include: analysis of the potential habitats of wildcat, accordance with the Austrian habitat model of wildcat, analysis of the potential corridors between wildcat habitats (digital map and geo-database). The application of this project was submitted in June 2016 by the leadpartner Technische Universität Dresden.

*5. develop the use of the Kaja Castle ruins in the park's education programmes as an example of how historical monuments can be incorporated into education on the environment.*

Our programmes for pupils and for adults are including some special offers which are connecting the visit of Kaja Castle ruins with some nature-education offers. In 2016 21 groups of pupils or adults booked this programme, overall 762 persons visited the Kaja Castle.

**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.

In 2016 the shareholders (Republic of Austria, federal province Niederösterreich) increased the Nationalpark Thayatal GmbHs budget by €200.000 per year.

The government of Lower Austria is preparing an amendment of the Thayatal National Parks regulation.

**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.

There are no changes of boundaries.

**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.

In 2016 a common project for nature protection management with European Diploma area “Wachau” and the Danube National Park was approved.

#### **4. AUSTRIA - WACHAU PROTECTED LANDSCAPE**

##### **1. Conditions**

*Condition #1: The scheme to build a dam on the Danube at Dürnstein has to be abandoned definitely, as well as a similar scheme within and immediately downstream from the area covered by the diploma:*

The condition has been totally fulfilled – no such plan has recently been discussed nor has any action taken place to create such plans or schemes.

##### **2. Recommendations**

**Recommendation #1: The existence of the Jauerling protected zone should continue to be guaranteed**

The Nature Park is still working as an independent body. Recently, the current grant project financing its management has been approved by the Lower Austrian State Government. The new managing director, Dr Birgit Habermann, has a 50 % employment and has, in the beginning, focused on finishing old projects, like the sewage treatment plant around the Nature Park House.

Talks about a new strategy, focusing on the Nature Park’s role in disseminating knowledge on nature protection, are on the way.

**Recommendation #2: The river should be maintained at its present level, guaranteeing the survival of the last alluvial forests**

The planning for the last big reconnection project of old side branches of the Danube to the main river is almost done, allowing the responsible body, via donau, to conduct a joint bid for tender for all necessary works.

At the same time, efforts to restore a more autochthonous composition of alluvial forest tree species are in full swing. Only this year, a few thousand non-autochthonous trees, like *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Acer negundo*, or *Ailanthus altissima*, in the whole region have been girdled and have been or will be replaced by autochthonous trees, like *Populus nigra*, *Prunus padus*, or *Ulmus laevis*.

Some of this work has been financed by a Rural Development project that the Wachau is organizing together with the National Parks Thayatal and Donau-Auen. Also the Danube Territorial Programme project DANUBE parks CONNECTED, with 14 project partners from protected areas in all states along the Danube except for Moldova and the Ukraine, has been approved and will start in January 2017. It will give us the chance to even more focus on fulfilling this recommendation.

**Recommendation #3: Work on restoration of the terraces and integration of the irrigation network should continue**

Terrace restoration continues in the usual way. As long as the terraces are kept in use for winegrowing, it is a necessary job on the winegrowers to keep up the walls. Since winegrowing has continued the last years without any loss of winegrowing area, keeping up the walls is not a problem, at the moment.

The same holds true with the irrigation networks. They are necessary, that's why they are kept up. Whenever a replacement is needed, old metal pipes are replaced by black rubber tubes. Since the irrigation systems are long-living investments, this doesn't happen that often, though.

**Recommendation #4: Strict standards should be imposed on river tourism traffic, to ensure that it meets appropriate quality requirements for the Wachau**

Following the discussions around the new jetty in Krems-Stein last year, the general discussion about the effects of river cruises, which get more and more every year, has not really stopped. For example, the Monastery of Melk has started to actively send cruise ship passengers on to the other big monastery of the region in Göttweig, since they cannot deal with all the people anymore.

Currently, the colleagues from the tourism destination management have started talks with the representatives from companies running cruise ships about how to make sure that the negative effects of the ships can be lowered and how more added value for the region can be generated by the cruise ships.

The topic will also become part of the things to watch out for for the World Heritage site management. We will therefore be kept informed by the people from the tourism destination management and maybe involved into the talks later, if feasible.

**Recommendation #5: The refurbishment of the Spitz quarry should finally be started; works should be staggered until 2019**

Different to some of the reports from the last years, it has shown that the question of legal ownership of the quarry has not yet been solved in a legally safe way. This is why currently some expertise on this question is worked out. In case the legal status of the quarry has been solved, the latest talks have shown that that the State Government of Lower Austria is ready to discuss a solution to the problem.

**Recommendation #6: The moufflon population should be brought within a limit compatible with natural regeneration of the forest, without systematic recourse to protection fences**

Since the last experts' meeting on the issue has taken place already nine years ago, in 2007, a new meeting has been arranged to discuss the current situation. It will take place on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, which means that it will be too late to report on its outcome already in this report. We will inform about the results of the meeting in next year's report.

**Recommendation #7: Efforts should be continued to preserve the apricot orchards**

The apricot farmers have started the creation of an apricot visitor and competency center around the monastery of Göttweig, which was visited by 42,000 people already in the first year. Part of the center is an apricot tree nursery, where certified clones of typical regional apricot varieties are cultivated and sold to the farmers, but also private garden owners.

**Recommendation #8: Steps should be taken to ensure that consultation on how to protect the Wachau against flooding takes place in cooperation with the local authorities concerned, in order to avoid separating the river from the hinterland by a substantial dyke**

Works on building flood protection systems go on, following the normal scheme of building 80 to 100 cm high concrete walls, on which in case of an event aluminum elements can be screwed on top. Since it is the local municipalities who are in charge of drafting these plans, it is assured that all flood protection devices can only be built with a strong link to the needs of the local people.

Currently, construction work is going on in the municipality of Emmersdorf. In some other municipalities, detail planning for the protection system is on its way.

### **3. Site management**

The works on the future UNESCO management plan for the World Heritage are still not finished, but there is a deadline now that we want to publicly present the plan by the end of February or the beginning of March 2017.

After that, we expect some permanent financing by the Republic of Austria, the Federal State of Lower Austria, and the municipalities of the region for a World Heritage site management which supposedly will consist of 1 ½ people. This management will, as it does now, also deal with all management aspects of the European Diploma.

In addition to that, all the concepts for nature protection management in our area, as described in the last annual reports, have finally worked out. So, in addition to the LIFE+ Nature project “Alluvial Forest Wilderness Wachau”, we have started cooperating with the two National Parks in Lower Austria, Thayatal (also a European Diploma site) and Donauauen, mainly in keeping up work on the dry lawn terraces of the region. Additional resources, both financial and know-how, will come from the Interreg Danube Territorial Programme project DANUBE parksCONNECTED (see also recommendation #2).

#### **4. Boundaries**

As for the boundaries of the World Heritage site, they have been put down in a map using the cadastral map in the background, so for each plot of land you can easily say now if it is part of the World Heritage site or not. On some spots, the boundaries were clarified and thus slightly changed, but only to an extent of 0.4 % of the total area.

The same boundaries are applied for the European Diploma site.

#### **5. Other information**

The website portfolio of the region is currently under reconstruction, this is why the website mentioned on page 1 is currently not up to date. The new websites will be launched during winter 2016/17.

#### **5. BELARUS - BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK**

**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

*New environmental legislation (Regulation of National park) was approved and adopted in 2012.*

*Conservation management plan (Management plan) of the National park was revised in 2015 broad participation of stakeholders for the period of 2016-2020 and is currently implemented.*

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 with 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 2016 amounted to 140 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 extensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilisers)

*No changes*

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;

*These types of works will be carried out if funding is available.*

*This year new government program for the development of nature protected areas system for the 2015-2019 was elaborated and signed. There is planned the realization of couple nature protection measures in Belovezhskaya Pushcha.*

*In the reporting year allocated budgets for implementation of scientific research amounted to c. 100.000 euro. In addition to that salaries and additional financing of conservation activities in frames of the State programme amounted to 150.000 euro. In comparison with 2015 the financing of research and conservation work increased by 2 times. Apart from that, additional financing of up to 100.000 euro for research and conservation work was provided within a joint programme for Belovezhskaja pushcha, implemented jointly by the National park, APB-BirdLife Belarus and Frankfurt zoological society (Germany)*



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. In total 54 sites of winter feeding ungulates in the territory were 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 c. 65 thousand hectares, mainly in the old-growth forest, current legislation forbids feeding of wild animals and regulation of their numbers.*

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;

*The genetic researches of bison populations in the national park were conducted. It's found the presence of Caucasian subspecies gene pool. 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 the it's impact on the environment and to avoid exceeding the limit of visitor's number.*

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 agro-tourism 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;

*There are no significant changes of recreation activity in the national park. In the reporting year there is an increase of visitors of the national park by 7% in comparison to 2015, with 300 thousand people visiting the park in 10 months.*

*There are 28 objects of agro-tourism which are located in buffer zone of national park in 2016.*

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 neighboring zones outside the National Park, in order to adjust the management plan or to substantiate environmental impact assessments.

*Constant monitoring of water quality (chemical composition, oxygen, minerals) in lakes and rivers is conducted by the District inspection of natural resources and environmental protection.*

*Monitoring of forestry (logging, the impact of bark beetle) is conducted by Forest department of national park).*

*Monitoring of wildlife (statistics on the elimination of mammals, populations of alien species) is being by the Department of protection of fauna of the national park.*

*Ecological monitoring of forest dynamic processes is conducted by scientific department of national park.*

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;

*Changes that allow for activities aimed at active fight against invasive alien species inside the National Park, including the strictly protected area, in coordination with the National Academy of Sciences, introduced in environmental legislation.*

*The recommendation is addressed in 2016 by adapting Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No99 from 16/03/2016, which enabled fighting of invasive species and implementation of activities aimed at restoration of hydrological regime in the strict protection zone.*

*In 2016 activities on eradication of red oak (*Quercus rubra*) were implemented on the area of 120 hectares.*

*National academy of sciences implemented research work on alien species of plants and animals in the National park, basing on which lists of alien species will be compiled.*

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).

*During this year national cartographic agency carried out the data actualization for the preparing a new national park tourist map scale of 1: 100,000 with new information.*

*Such map will be published in the end of 2016 and will illustrate new boundaries of the functional zones, as well as the logo of the European diploma for protected areas*

**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.

*Management plan of the national park for the next 5 years was actualized during this year.*

*Changes in the boundaries of functional zones was made according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus N99 from 16.03.2016 – the strict protection zone was enlarged to 58,1 thousand ha. According to new legislation on the territory of the strict protection zone it is allowed to fight invasive species and implement activities aimed at restoration of hydrological regime affected by earlier drainage works.*

**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.

*The boundaries of the National park were changed according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus N99 from 16/03/2016. The new boundaries included forest which didn't belong to the national park but were located inside the boundaries of the national park or were directly adjoining it. These forests were swapped for isolated forests surrounded by lands of other land users.*

**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.

## **6. BELARUS - BEREZINSKY STATE BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

### **1. Conditions:**

1. *The protection regime and ownership of the land should be kept unchanged.*

Ownership of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve remained unchanged and thus, there were no changes in the reserve's current protection status. Protection regime of the reserved area is carried out in accordance with the current nature protection laws.

### **2. Recommendations:**

1. *Sufficient resources need to be generated both by the Government and by the Reserve – to protect effectively the biodiversity resources and to continue scientific research. In addition to extra-budgetary sources of income, other sources should be tapped especially in cooperation with NGOs such as Akhova Ptushak Batskaushchyny (APB) – BirdLife Belarus, and WWF.*

In order to increase the efficiency of the protection of natural systems and to conduct the scientific research, a full range of activities scheduled for 2016 has been performed in accordance with the State program "Environment protection and sustainable use of nature resources for the years 2016-2020": information and indication signs have been constructed and installed along the boundaries of the reserve; a number of measures aimed at control the invasive alien species of wild plants has been implemented; advertising and informational printed materials about the reserve have been prepared and published, four rest points have been established along ecological trails and routs.

At the expense of funds of the Union State of Russia and Belarus a multi-year project was proceeded in the Reserve on the following topic: "To develop a pilot geo-information system (GIS) of satellite monitoring of marshes for the purpose of their protection and restoration under intensive anthropogenic impact".

A grant on a competitive basis has been assigned to Berezinsky Reserve by Belorussian Republican foundation of basic researches for the realization of a biannual (2016-2017) scientific project "Natural successions of forest ecosystems after different types of anthropogenous violation"

2. *Further efforts should be taken to prevent negative effects of fragmentation of the Reserve by the M3 road, and to preserve the integrity of the core zone.*

Monitoring has been continued to assess the impact of the M3 road on death of large mammals (registration of cases, places and time of death) and the effectiveness of the existing crossings for amphibians.

3. *Further study of the dynamics of the mammal populations, animal movements and fauna migration between the core and the buffer zones should be carried out – to monitor the current situation affected by hunting.*

Implementation of the following parts of scientific and research work has been started in 2016: "Analysis of modern state and perspectives of development of theriocomplexes of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve", "Analysis of modern state of diurnal birds of prey on the territory of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve". Measures on additional forage and estimation of state of free-living European bison herd in accordance with Action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of bisons' micropopulation in the Republic of Belarus for the years 2015 - 2019 have been realized. The network of photo-traps (10 pieces) usage in the places of big mammals' (ungulates and predators) migration has been expanded.

4. *Continue with the efforts for ensuring that the development of tourism is well controlled.*

Tourism development is controlled effectively on the basis of scientific research. With assistance of the scientific department the recommendations for the organization and conduction of ecological tours on observation of wild animals in natural habitats were made. One-day weekend excursions into the

wildlife of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve were conducted from March to September of the current year under the guidance and supervision of the research department staff. Primary emphasis is made on the ecological education of population. Three new ecological-touristic routes were worked out and accepted by Scientific and Technical Council of the Reserve – one pedestrian and two equestrian ones.

In 2016 a realization of measures on creation of "The Center of mythological tourism" in the frames of «green» initiative "Ecotourism in the Berezinsky: innovative approaches, partnership models, "green" consciousness". The activities are funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Program in Belarus through Belorussian nongovernmental association "Rest in Countryside" in the framework of the project "Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Republic of Belarus". In the current year within the initiative an ecological pedestrian trail "In the country of Myths" has been created.

Proper information policy to attract visitors for the purpose of environmental education is carried out.

*5. In order to mitigate possible risks and hazards connected with climatic changes and possible large-scale disturbances on the reserve, the study program focused on these topics should be carried out.*

Realization of research subject "Complex analysis of state and dynamics of nature ecosystems of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, scientific support to its protection and sustainable use" has begun in the Reserve within the state program "Biological diversity, biological and forest resources in terms of climate change and development of innovative environmental technology" has been accepted for execution and included in the work plan for 2016 - 2020". The program of scientific research on the topics "Influence of climatic changes, anthropogenous and zoogenous factors on the hydrological regime of wetlands of the Reserve" and "Dynamics of the structure of forest ecosystems of the Reserve in the conditions of long-term regime of strict protection" has been started.

### **3. Site Management:**

After annual audit conducted by the staff of the certificated organization FSC Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve has affirmed the certificate for the system of forest management and supply chain of FSC™ available until 2020.

Basic measures planned on the current year within the Management Plan for Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve for the years 2025-2019 were realized.

During the reporting period new jobs were created, which increased the staff of the Berezinsky reserve by 9 people.

### **4. Boundaries:**

The boundaries of the Reserve in the current year remained unchanged

### **5. Other information:**

An Agreement of mutual cooperation between the Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve of France, the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve of Belarus and Kampinos National Park (Biosphere Reserve "Puszcza Kampinoska") of Poland for the years 2017-2020 has been signed.

On the base of Berezinsky Reserve an out action in the framework of International conclusive workshop on the summary of implementation of Joint Program of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Creation of Emerald Network of areas of special conservation interest, Phase II" has been conducted.

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve extensively uses the logo of the European diploma. Thus, in the presentations at the above mentioned events this logo was used. A logo and a brief information about awarding the reserve the European Diploma is put on the official website of the protected area <http://www.berezinsky.by/> in the sections "Partners" and "General information", as well as a link to the website of the Council of Europe. It is possible to acquaint oneself with the original of the



**2. The authorities concerned must provide a sufficient budget to ensure regular operation of the park as well as maintenance of its infrastructure:**

Since Bulgaria is a member of the European Union (2007) the main source of funding of activities on biodiversity conservation and on planning and maintenance of protected areas became OP Environment (European Regional Development Fund). During the last program period the 2007 – 2013 Park Directorate has implemented four projects funded by this program (Priority 3 – Preservation of biodiversity and nature protection).

The first finished project was *Restoration of natural habitats* focused on preparation of technical project for the implementation of anti-erosion measures in the park. The result from this project was used in the biggest project of the CBNPD *Central Balkan – park for everyone*, thanks to which the anti-erosion activities were implemented on the ground. The second finished project was *Provision of information and improvement of the visitor's infrastructure in Central Balkan National Park*. The main focus here was on protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems in the park achieved through better management of the visitors, which can use well maintained touristic infrastructure and are better informed about the value and regimes of the territory. The project *Update of Central Balkan National Park Management Plan* was essential for the successful implementation of the legal requirements for developing and implementing in a certain time interval of management plans for protected areas (see above).

Through the project *Central Balkan – park for everyone* were implemented huge varieties of activities divided in four main groups: 1. Protection of species and habitats, 2. Tourist and administrative infrastructure, 3. Interpretation and educational programs and 4. Planning and optimization of the management. The total budget of this project is over 7 900 000 BGN (~4 000 000 EUR). OP Environment 2007 – 2013 became a main financial source for different activities in the park that allows the Park administration to implement a lot of projects planned in last 10 years which didn't happen because the lack of enough resources.

In the current program period CBNPD will rely again on the projects funding through OP Environment.

CBNPD was also beneficiary of programs funded by the grant for small projects of GEF (a demonstration model of a hybrid lighting system and solar hot water system for chalets and other buildings in the national park), Norwegian Program (establishment of Public Advisory council), Operational program Human resources (training of students), the Bulgarian-Swiss biodiversity conservation program ("Connecting conservation with rural development"), Instrumental Life + (projects related to conservation and reintroduction of Imperial Eagle, Saker Falcon, large vultures, improving conditions for large predators).

CBNPD as administrative structure of the Ministry of environment and water has annual budget ensured from the National budget and the State Enterprise for Management Environmental Activities – SEMEPA. Annual budget for the functioning of the Directorate – maintenance of bases, providing of consumables and monthly salaries for the employees, is guaranteed by the national budget. In recent years this amounts to about 1.1 million BGN per year. SEMEPA provide some additional resources for the implementation of annual plan of activities in emergency infrastructure maintenance, publication of information materials, activities for fire protection of the park, monitoring activities on biodiversity, etc. In recent years annually SEMEPA provides 62 000 BGN for the needs of mentioned plan.

**3. A public advisory council should be established in order to ensure public participation in the management of the park:**

Since September 2010 a Public Advisory Council functions as an advisory body to the Park Management. It was established as a result from the project *Model for Management with the Stakeholders Participation of Central Balkan – part of the National Ecological Network*. The Council consists of 20 representatives of different stakeholders – representatives of municipal authorities and village mayors, chalet keepers, local tourism entrepreneurs, tour operators, artists, representatives of scientific and non-government

conservation sector, users of park bio-resources, mass media, Ministry of Environment and Water, and state forest agency.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of October as part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the park the Public Advisory Council together with the Scientific Advisory Board held a joint meeting. The important topics in the agenda were the application of CBNPD and Municipalities of Karlovo, Troyan, Sevlievo, Anton and Pavel banya for inclusion of the park and adjacent territories in the Biosphere Reserve Central Balkan, the successful end of elaboration of joint nomination dossier for the extension of the existing UNESCO World Heritage Property – “Primeval Beech Forest of Carpathians and Ancient Beech Forests of Germany” and IUCN evaluation mission for Bulgarian proposal – beech forests in the reserves of CBNP, the theme about grazing in the park and in particular annual grazing plan for 2017.

Link to the Management Plan:

[http://visitcentralbalkan.net/assets/userfiles/file/Administration/APU\\_CBNP\\_2016-2025\\_ENG.pdf](http://visitcentralbalkan.net/assets/userfiles/file/Administration/APU_CBNP_2016-2025_ENG.pdf)

**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. A buffer zone around the park should be established (conformity with the zone, limited impact on forest and agricultural land, protection of water, etc.); the obligation to implement the Natura 2000 network, as prescribed by the Habitats Directive (92/43 EEC) in the National park and its buffer zone should be acknowledged:**

Territory bordering the Central Balkan National Park was declared as follows:

- SPA Central Balkan – buffer, BG 0002128 – Decision №335/26.05.2011 of the Council of Ministers. The area has been declared by Order RD-321/04.04.2013 of the Minister of Environment and Water.
- SCI Central Balkan – buffer, BG 0001493 – Decision №802/04.12.2007 of the Council of Ministers. The complete mapping of all areas in Bulgaria under the Habitats Directive was carried out in the period 2011 – 2012. Declaration order for SCI is expected. The National nature protection service (part of MOEW) are committed Central Balkan NP Directorate to take leading role in the discussion of future norms and regimes.

**2. No mass tourism activities in contradiction with the sustainable development principles should be authorized in the park:**

Touristic routes and viewpoints are in Sustainable tourism zone of the park. The zone is the tool that the Park directorate uses to guide and manages the tourist flow. CBNP annually is visited by 60 – 70 thousand tourists, mainly hikers from Bulgaria. Traditionally in the park hiking is stimulated and the infrastructure is adopted mainly for this type of tourism. Into account the size of the park and the total length of tourist routes – about 580 kilometers, the number of tourists is not high and has not changed significantly in recent years. In 2016 tourist floats in summer months were almost the same (slightly lower) than those of the 2015. The highest period again is the summer months, especially August. Still one of the interpretative routes is closed for reconstruction, waiting for inclusion in project funded through OP Environment in program period 2014 – 2020. The most popular interpretative route in the park is still Byala reka eco path (1.8 km) that is situated on the park border near town of Kalofer, Municipality of Karlovo with average number of visitors during the months of July to October reached almost 1 000 people per week. For rest of the popular routes attendance is between several dozens and 100 visitors per week in summer months. From hikers routes the most popular is still the route Kalofer – Ray chalet again in park section Kalofer. Event tourism in the park does not develop. There is a cultural

(honoring the memory of fallen revolutionaries) event that attract several dozens of visitors in one day on one place.

**3. Well-managed summer grazing should be encouraged; a monitoring programme to determine the ideal number of animals permitted in order to respect biodiversity should be established; the possibility of controlling juniper and other shrub growth by means other than fire should be studied:**

Summer grazing in CBNP has 7 centuries of history. The traditional way of use of treeless area of the park has set its current appearance. Since 1990 significant reduction of livestock on pastures of the national park has led to the beginning of successional processes leading to overgrowing of pastures mainly by shrubs and precisely mainly by Siberian juniper (*Juniperus communis* var. *saxatilis* Pall.). Since 2007 when Bulgaria became a member of EU the implementation of Rural Development Programme (RDP) increases the interest to High Mountain pasturing in national parks sharply. That was the reason CBNPD to take measures for development of more precise Annual plan for livestock grazing and hay usage in the park. In early 2016 the draft of Grazing plan 2016 was discussed with livestock owners from all areas adjacent to the park.

In 2016 the map of pastures was the same as this one for 2015. Small reduction of the area was made for management considerations. For example 11 ha were excluded from grazing area due to fire in early April 2016. Thanks to Annual grazing plan for 2016 and above mentioned restrictions the total area of pastures in the CBNP in 2015 was 15 395.9 ha which is about 37 ha less than 2015. The Grazing plan 2016 again gave to the users of pastures the opportunity to clean partially grazing area manually from juniper overgrowing after expert evaluation. Given the labor intensity and the financial value of such a procedure there were not interested to do so.

Due to increased interest in the use of pastures last years, Park Directorate applies a step system of assessing applications and allocating eligible pasture areas. During 2016, three-tier system was applied. On the first step, the Directorate provides pastures to those who wish to use the same areas as in 2015. This group includes farmers approved under RDP's sub-measure "Traditional practices for seasonal grazing animals" and farmers that use regularly pastures in last 5 years but with limit up to 100 ha. On the second step vacant pastures were distributed among remaining farmers from the park adjacent villages. On the third step remaining free grazing areas (where there was any) were distributed among other applicants.

In 2016 the effects of changes in RDP's sub-measure "Traditional practices for seasonal grazing animals" in the program period 2014 – 2020 became visible for the first time. CBNPD and experts from other national parks proposed these changes in above mentioned sub measure in 2014 and now part of them are fact. They make the management of mountain pastures easier and more successful.

**4. The situation of the buildings within the park should be clarified and the necessary means to maintain or improve them should be ensured, as appropriate:**

CBNPD has done a geodesic surveying of over 230 buildings and facilities in the park territory which must be included in the national cadaster (when funding is available). This help to clarify the owners and especially of the abandoned buildings and facilities. On this base the Park administration take the necessary actions to improve or remove them. In 2015 thanks to project *Central Balkan – park for everyone* more than 20 objects were removed from the park. After that the terrain was restored.

**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 in the Site Management!



**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.

In 2016 the CBNPD continue working on the nomination dossier for the extension of the existing UNESCO World Heritage Property – “Primeval Beech Forest of Carpathians and Ancient Beech Forests of Germany” with partners from 12 other European countries. The beech forests in the reserves of CBNPD are Bulgarian proposal for the future serial WHP. The submission of the dossier was at the end of January 2016. The IUCN evaluation mission was held in early October 2016.

In the summer of 2016 CBNPD filed the application form for two of the parts – core zone and buffer zone, of the proposed post-Seville Biosphere Reserve Central Balkan. Four of the nine strict nature reserves in the park were declared as a biosphere reserves in 1977. These reserves were BR from old type. After Second International Congress on Biosphere Reserves in Seville, Spain in 1995 these reserves did not meet the requirements for functional zoning. Indeed they were only core zone without possibilities for any interaction with people living in the region. In the new proposal all nine nature reserves in the park are the core zone, the rest parts of the park are buffer zone and territory of adjacent municipalities (Trojan, Karlovo, Sevlievo, Anton and Pavel banya) will be the transition zone of BR Central Balkan. The filled application was submitted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 from UNESCO National Commission.

## **8. CZECH REPUBLIC - KARLŠTEJN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

**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.

No conditions were attached to the renewal of the European Diploma.

**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 restoration of non-forested areas of forest steppes and xerophilous calcareous grasslands through appropriate management; make funding available to conclude contractual agreements with the goatherds and/or shepherds in order to guarantee grazing, and thereby maintenance, in the long term;

Goat and sheep grazing management, shrub and tree removal on dry calcareous grasslands and forest steppe localities continued in the extent of previous years (40 hectares of conservation grazing, 2 hectares of shrub and tree removal). The obstacle for long term contracts is that financial funding is always announced only for the current year.

2. Continue the restoration of the broad-leaved forests by gradually eliminating conifer plantations; in the interests of allowing natural regeneration, avoid reintroducing non-native game species such as mouflon or fallow deer;

Removal of non-native tree species (Norway spruce – 0.96 hectares, Black Pine – 0.56 hectares and European larch – 0.53 hectares) and their exchange for broad-leaved species (beech, oak, and lime) has continued. No non-native game species has been introduced.

3. Make it compulsory to draw up land-use plans (spatial development) and explore the possibility of reinforcing the special legal competences of the reserve's staff and other authorities responsible for nature conservation; also stimulate the establishment of regular consultation procedures with relevant local and regional authorities, scientists and NGOs;

All local communities have drawn up land-use plans. The cooperation with scientific institutions has continued, mainly on the monitoring of prescribed management, such as grazing or experimental coppicing. The main partner institutions are Charles University in Prague and Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. A scientific paper on litter raking was published in Journal of Applied Ecology (Traditional forest management practices stop forest succession and bring back rare plant species: doi: 10.1111/1365-2664.12801).

4. Improve signposting, notably by translating the texts into English, and possibly into German, and by displaying the European Diploma logo on the signs;

There was no change in 2016.

5. Stimulate the development of high quality visitors' centres and organise environmental education for the wider public; encourage local authorities to disseminate information on the merits of the nature reserve and its position in Europe in appropriate places (such as railway stations, camping sites, municipal halls, museums, etc.);

The project study of a visitor centre went through a new stage. During the year, several educational excursions for the public were organized by the Administration staff.

6. Ensure that the necessary budget and resources are available for the manifold functions and operational tasks of the reserve's staff, including administration, research, surveillance, education and training, as well as habitat management.

In 2016, the budget of the Administration, including the budget for active management of target species and habitats, was provided in a regular extent in accordance to needs and capabilities of the office.

**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.

Site management has not changed.

**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 took place.

## 9. CZECH REPUBLIC - PODYJÍ NATIONAL PARK

**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.

There weren't any conditions attached to renewal of European Diploma.

**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. ensure, in collaboration with the operator of the hydroelectric power station at Vranov, that the negative amplitudes in the flow regime from the dam sluices are reduced and that a minimum residual flow rate is guaranteed**

The Permission for water use for small hydroelectric plant Vranov II (came into force on 19. 3. 2016) fixed minimum residual flow to 2.8 m<sup>3</sup>/s. This fulfilled the requirement to establish ecologically bearable minimum flow in the Dyje River. The extended permission for water use for large hydroelectric plant Vranov I came into force in August 2016. The new Handling regulations (manipulační řád) can be issued under this permission. The conditions for environmentally acceptable mode of flow in the river, including the frequency and maximum flow rates and way of floodwave emergence will be included in this Handling regulations. The Handling regulations are now being prepared.

**2. secure the adoption and implementation of the management plan for the period 2010-2019**

No changes. The management plan for Podyji National Park 2012 – 2020 has been adopted and is followed.

**3. control the development of leisure activities, and in particular avoid the use of the River Dyje for water sports;**

No changes – water sports in Dyje river are still prohibited.

**4. intensify co-operation with the Thayatal National Park to harmonise the fishing regulations within the two parks and reduce the negative effects of fishing in the core zones**

The influence of angling on fish in the Dyje River is focus of research, which is part of Dyje/Thaya 2020 project. The result of this research will be turned in recommendations for necessary changes of conditions for angling in the core zone.

**5. develop relations with municipalities and the local community in order to encourage sustainable management of their land within the national park, in line with the principles and rules laid down in the management plan**

Several municipalities cooperated with NP administration on projects of increasing landscape diversity, or they have done their own projects (5 municipalities, tree planting, restoration of old roads and water features)

**6. pursue and improve the management of agricultural areas, particularly in the buffer zones;**

More than 100 ha of field was grassed, some changes in land leasing for diversification of land use, 5 new wood features was created in the landscape.

**7. grant funding to public authorities for water supply and purification within the park's perimeter**

Three municipalities were newly connected to wastewater treatment plant.

**8. undertake research on the influence of the artificial barriers on the ecosystem of the Dyje River. Mitigation measures on the riparian ecosystems should be adopted**

Research, which is part of Dyje/Thaya 2020 project will also focus on artificial barriers in the Dyje River and its impact on the ecosystem.

**2. 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.

There are no major change in site management. The management plan for 2012 – 2020 has been adopted and is followed. The amendment of Nature Protection Act hasn't been approved yet and old version is still in practice.

The Podyji National Park Administration has still 43 employees.

The Dyje/Thaya 2020 project (INTERREG) was approved. Part of it is also research on fish community and question of river flow regime, migration barriers and angling.

New project "Military LIFE for Nature" (Life+) was approved. The two steppe localities were chosen for Exmoore pony grazing.

**3. 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

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

## 10. ESTONIA – MATSALU NATIONAL PARK

**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.

**Condition 1.** The ongoing land reform process shall not in any way change the present characteristics of the national park or be detrimental to the park's biodiversity.

**Condition 2.** Maintenance of meadows, particularly the coastal ones, shall continue to be given high priority

**Condition 3.** The national park's management shall have the necessary funds to continue its monitoring, enforcement and environmental activities.

**Condition 4.** Private open land shall not be developed in any way that would be incompatible with the aims of the park.

Environmental Board is taking full account of the conditions.

**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.

**Recommendation1.** Co-operation with the farmers should continue, and where possible increase, particularly in the form of support for traditional uses like grazing or mowing.

**Recommendation 2.** The national park's management shall continue to play a social role to help the local people within the park's boundaries develop activities compatible with the aims of the park, such as bird-watching, handicrafts and restoration of the historical heritage.

**Recommendation 3.** Potential external threats from industry, agriculture, tourism and development should be continuously monitored and a buffer zone in which hunting is prohibited should be established around the national park

**Recommendation 4.** Continue the programme for the elimination of alien species.

**Recommendation 5.** Reinforce the programme of scientific studies.

Environmental Board is making continued efforts to meet the recommendations

**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.

1. The preparation of the draft of the new protection rules for Matsalu national park reached next phase.
2. 6465 ha of semi-natural grasslands were managed by making hay or grazing and 427 ha of semi-natural grasslands were renovated by bush cutting and erecting new fences.
3. For meadow management 2 voluntary camps were arranged in Saastna, Kumari island in cooperation with Estonian Fund for Nature and State Forest Management Centre
4. Temporary fence were erected around Frog Orchid's habitat (extremely rare in Estonia) to keep the growing plants from being eaten by grazing cattle. Last year's fence worked well and very many Frog Orchids bloomed and fruited.
5. The following monitoring schemes were arranged this year: Monitoring of breeding birds in alluvial meadow, and small islands and the migrating cranes and geese, orchids on coastal meadows, white-tailed eagles breeding success,

**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.

No significant changes to report

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

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

No changes

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetation cover; presumed causes

No changes

- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

The breeding groups of Golden Jackals has risen to at least to 5 groups (Mõisaküla, Ullaste, Kirikuküla, Puise, Tuuru)

## **7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**

### 7.1. Cultural heritage

#### 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

There were 6 workshops on cultural heritage - wool handcraft, works with scythes, renovation of wooden houses for the residence of national park

### 7.2. Socio-economic context

#### 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Two new tourism farms started work in the area. New concert area in Salevere was organized. The Lihula municipality coffee day was very popular and was connected with the national park. Matsalu Film festival had over 6000 visitors.

## **8. Education and scientific interest**

### 8.1. Visitors – Information policy

#### 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)

Brochure - Matsalu National Park booklet in Estonian, English and Russian

Booklet Facts about Matsalu National Park

#### 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

State Forest Management Centre has arranged 116 nature education programmes for 2299 participants and Environmental Board has

In 2016 there have been registered 35 582 visits. The most visited areas are Keemu (19 933) and Suitsu (8620) resting places.

#### 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

In the frames of Matsalu International Nature Film Festival the minister of Environment visited the area  
EDPA expert Michael Usher visited the area

### 8.2. Scientific research

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

Southern-dunlin nesting habitat research held by Life Since University

Predation on coastal meadow held by Environmental Agency

#### 8.2.2. Scientific publications

Entomological field work in Western and Southern Estonia (2.-8.7.2016) - Report of the preliminary results

## **9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)**

### 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

No changes

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

154 ha of state lands have been rented to local farmers for meadow management.

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

No changes

## **10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)**

10.1. Improvements made

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

93 farmers are managing 6465 ha valuable meadows. 427 ha are under renovation.

Inventory 811 ha of potential semi-natural grasslands have been carried out.

Permission for bush cutting have been given for landscape management 71 ha

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

No changes

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

Minor reconstructions on the path Penijõe where the attractive posters about correct behaviour on pastures with grazing farm animals and one hay transport road reconstruction finalised

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Rajakaamera and new GPS for managers

10.1.5. Waste management

No changes

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

No changes

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

Minor changes to optimize administration

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

No changes

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

No changes

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

No changes

## **11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

Appraisal visit by the CoE expert Michael Usher has helped to bring different stakeholders together for discussions and increase public attention to Matsalu National Park.
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## 11. FINLAND - EKENÄS ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK

**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.

Condition: within one year finalise and complete the approval process of the management plan (master plan) which itself will include plans to enlarge the national park.

Situation: No changes after year 2015: Management plan was accepted year 2012 and it included the plan to enlarge the national park. Metsähallitus also made year 2014 a report/appraisal on the needs of the existing marine national parks including Ekenäs archipelago national park. It included the same suggestion on enlargement but the inventory data and biological, especially marine values were explained more detailed. More precise landuse plan (zoning) concerning the eastern part of Jussarö island was completed year 2015 to define more precisely which parts should be added to national park

**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. Make efforts to implement all aspects on the new management plan

- Implementation has been described in annual reports.

2. Inform the Secretariat of the result of the management effectiveness evaluations (Report of the state of the parks) which will be made at five years intervals;

- Site specific management effectiveness evaluations (MEE) in the IUCN framework are no longer undertaken for individual national parks in Finland. However, comprehensive management plans have been drawn up for all national parks, excluding the few most recently established parks. In addition, Natura Site Condition Assessments (NATA) have been performed at least once for corresponding Natura 2000 sites.

NATA involves assessing the status of key on-site natural, cultural, and use values, the pressures and threats having impact on them, as well defining measures and planning (including management plan updates) needed to maintain these value or restore them to target condition. The Nata assessment, in its present form and periodically repeated (ideally every 6-12 years), is now considered a sufficient examination of management effectiveness. As such, it is suitable for comprehensive analysis and evaluation of a large number of sites (there are more than 1800 Natura sites in Finland).

For large protected areas with multiple objectives, such as national park, supplementary review is needed. This involves insight into role and impact of the site in its surroundings, as well as extending the evaluation to resource use analysis (input-output-outcome). Output and resource efficiency are monitored and evaluated against management and operational plans as continual basis, visitor spending effects of nature tourism and recreation are assessed for each national park annually, and protected area management performance is also evaluated periodically at regional and network level as a regular part of the long term Action Programme of Metsähallitus Parks and Wildlife Finland.

Ekenäs Archipelago National parks management plan was approved 2012. The regional assessment of key site values and management planning need in 2016 concluded that there is now need for further measures. Renewal on the NATA assessment is anticipated by 2020.

3. Continue the management of habitat types and species, particular attention should be paid to



- the inventory of marine habitats and improvement of methods involved: has been complied as planned also year 2016, when special attention was paid to inventory methods and developing them.

- the restoration for damaged communities and the control of alien species: has been complied annually as planned. One new derogation for mink and raccoon dog control was issued to a new hunter, with the aim of minimizing the predation on nesting water birds.

4. Continue to pay close attention to the recreational facilities and educational issues, in particular

- improve the safety, quality and quantity of the infrastructure

- further develop customer service and interpretation and

- raise the public's awareness of nature conservation in Ekenäs Archipelago National Park:

The nature path in Jussarö Island was complemented 2016 and the old coastguard tower opened for visitors.

5. Review and where necessary renew the regulations of the national park within two years:

Totally complied. New regulations were given year 2013.

6. Deepen co-operation with local stakeholders, especially in the nature tourism sector:

- Complying as planned. Several events have been organized during years. Year 2016 normal annual meeting with local entrepreneurs was held. Finland 100 year jubilee celebrations to be held 2017 were planned together with local stakeholders and entrepreneurs.

**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.

See sections 6-9 for details and explanations.

**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.

The diploma and logo can be seen in Ekenäs Visitor Centre. The logo is also in the information boards at the national park and in the national park leaflet/brochure. The logo is also on national park and visitor centre webpages (finnish, swedish and english pages).

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The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

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

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated: no changes
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes: peatland vegetation & insects are returning steadily on restored peatlands.
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds.

Invasive small predators have been removed during 2016, within the same frames as during previous years. The hunter in charge had to be changed to a new hunter, to whom a new derogation was issued. The hunting bags for 2016 was 2 raccoon dogs and 6 minks.

## **7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
  - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage. No changes.
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
  - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context: No changes

## **8. Education and scientific interest**

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
  - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)  
No changes.
  - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Estimated number of visits to Ekenäs Visitor Centre is 18 432 visitors year 2016, guided groups 127 and number of persons in guided groups approximately 1 932. Customer service satisfactory index is 4,5 out of 5 being maximum. Number of visits to national park was approximately 54000 (50 000 year 2015), of which Rödjan was 8600 and Jussarö 10 000. Local economic impacts of visitors spending in 2016 were following: The total income and job impacts were about 2.9 million euros ( total impact of spending) and 28 jobs (full-time equivalent).

- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

Local member of parliament and member of European parliament visited the national park.

- 8.2. Scientific research:

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

Marine bottom habitat inventories continued in national park year 2016 in a small scale concentrated on few coastal lagoons. Special notice was put to inventory methods and improving them.

- 8.2.2. Scientific publications:

Marine inventories conducted on this area during years 2005-2016 were included to Parks & Wildlife Finland's report "Meri ja rannikon suojelualueiden tietotarpeet - MeriHOTT-hankkeen loppuraportti" <http://julkaisut.metsa.fi/julkaisut/show/2069>

## **9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)**

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations: No changes

- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.): no changes
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve): no changes

## **10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)**

### 10.1. Improvements made

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

A 3-day volunteer camp checked again (started year 2011) all the known patches of invasive species *Rosa rugosa* (ca. 13) + surroundings. All the patches were re-treated and now on all sites there is left only 1 - 15 small stems of *R. rugosa* left. *R. rugosa* has died completely on 7 patches so the work is helping. Metsähallitus is preparing a LIFE project application including restoration of lagoons and coastal meadows and sites in Ekenäs Archipelago National Park are included.

#### 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime): no changes

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

The nature path in Jussarö Island was complemented and the old coastguard tower opened for visitors.

#### 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities): no changes

#### 10.1.5. Waste management: no changes

#### 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems: no changes

### 10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made: From the beginning of the year two park areas (Uusimaa and Southwest areas) was united to one regional area. New park superintendent Mr Henrik Jansson started as the head of recreational services ie. park superintendent and Ms Petra Niskanen as customer service manager in the new bigger regional area.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made: no changes made

10.2.3. Internal policing measures: no internal policy measures during 2016.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action: only minor infringement of regulations were discovered and no legal actions were taken.

## **12. FINLAND – SEITSEMINEN NATIONAL PARK**

**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.

Implement the new master plan for the Seitseminen National Park and evaluate by 2014 if there is a need of a new updated management plan.

Implementation is going on and no need of an updated management plan has occurred.

Metsähallitus ISO 14001-certified environmental management system evaluation was arranged in Seitseminen. Evaluation of recreational facilities, customer service and restoration work was evaluated in September..

**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.

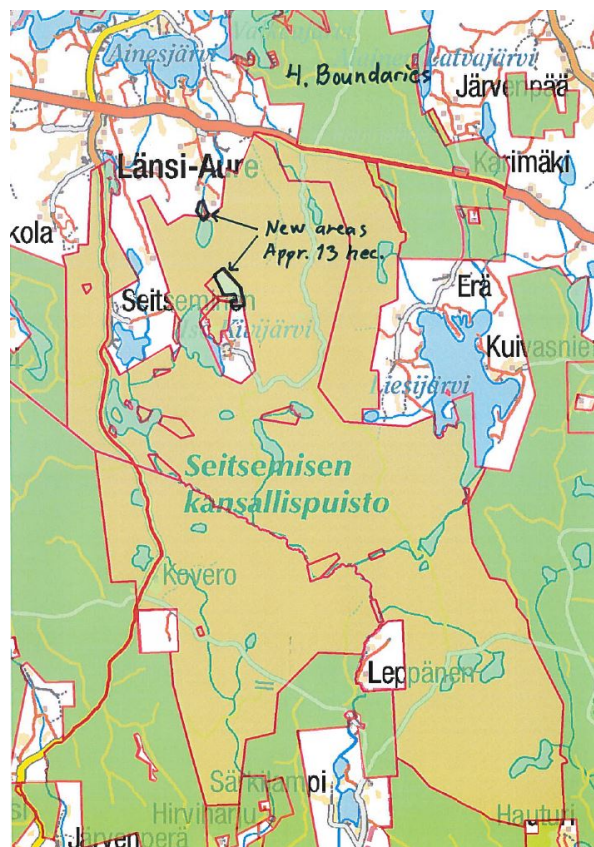
1. Inform the Secretariat of the result of the management effectiveness evaluations (Report of the state of the parks) which will be made at five years intervals;
  - the latest report is published in 2007 and the next is planned to be ready in 2016.
2. Continue the restoration plans for both mires and forests; continue arrangements for the appropriate grazing of meadows to encourage their biodiversity;
  - grazing complying as planned.
3. Metsähallitus should continue to bring together people with interests in biodiversity so as to foster the transfer and exchange of knowledge; scientific research should actively continue;
  - complying as planned. Group of specialists on mires from Estonia visited restored sites in mires and forests. Also a group of specialists on nature conservation from Hungary visited restoration sites.
4. Deepen co-operation with local stakeholders, especially in the nature tourism sector:
  - complying as planned. Several events were organized for the local nature tourism enterprises.
5. Provide the necessary funding to continue the renovation of the recreational facilities; customer services and nature interpretation should be further developed;
  - complying as planned.

**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.

State bought two areas ( together appr. 13 hectares ) to the National Park. See map attached.



**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.

**7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**

7.2. Socio-economic context

7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

Metsähallitus has co-operated with the Criminal Sanctions Agency over ten years employing open prison inmates in the management of protected areas, helping them to integrate back into society. In the area of Seitsemisen and Helvetinjärvi National Parks cooperation began in 2014 and the input of convicts in various maintenance and restoration duties has been annually 2 person-years.

**8. Education and scientific interest**

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Estimated number of visits to Seitsemisen Visitor Centre is 31 000 and Kovero Crown Tenant Farm 12 124 in 2016. The number of visitors in guided groups will be approximately 5 500.

The number of visits to Seitsemisen National Park will be approximately 45 000 in 2016.

The provincial co-operation in environmental education was not very active during the year, due to limited resources of the participants of the environmental education network.

### 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

Co-operation with local entrepreneurs and tourism operators was promoted furthermore. Twenty local entrepreneur has made a partnership agreement with Metsähallitus. Osuuskunta Paluu cooperative (which was created to serve Finns returning home from abroad), arranged an education for local entrepreneurs in marketing and communicational networking, and several educational events were arranged in Seitsemien during the year.

In May 2016 The Everyone Outdoors project organized education to the employees of Seitsemien National Park and to the local entrepreneurs. The objective was to take advantage of the effects of nature on health and well-being and to encourage everyone to enjoy Finland's nature; diseases and disabilities are not an obstacle to green exercise. The Everyone Outdoors project aims to:

- Make it possible for all Finns to experience nature and encourage them to engage in health-enhancing physical activity in the great outdoors.
- Intensify collaboration between the sports sector and those who maintain nature destinations. Combine expertise related to applied and health-enhancing physical activity on the one hand and the natural world and green exercise destinations on the other.
- Expand the understanding of various organizations of accessibility, health enhancing physical activity, applied physical activity, the health and well-being effects of nature, green exercise opportunities and cooperation opportunities.
- Plan future green exercise destinations together from the perspective of different types of people.
- Ensure the continuity of collaboration well into the future.

First trail running event was organized in Seitsemien National Park 21.8.2016 in co-operation with sports association "Ikaalisten nouseva voima". There were happy 100 runners. The trail running event will be organized again next year.

## 10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

### 10.1. Improvements made

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

Nature center was under a minor interior renovation to improve the facilities for customer services. Renovation was finished by spring 2015.

## 13. FRANCE – CAMARGUE NATIONAL RESERVE

**1. Conditions :** Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

### **Garantir la mise en œuvre du plan de gestion 2011-2015 :**

En tant que réserve naturelle nationale, la mise en œuvre annuelle du plan de gestion nous est demandée par l'Etat français, via la DREAL Provence Alpes Côte-d'Azur, afin d'obtenir la subvention de fonctionnement. Elle continue donc d'être assurée.

Le bilan annuel d'activités 2015 a été validé par les instances de gouvernance de la Réserve (Conseil de Direction et Conseil Scientifique) le 10 novembre 2016.

Le plan de gestion 2011-2015 se terminant en 2015, son évaluation a été réalisée et quelques éléments de synthèse ont été décrits dans le rapport annuel du Conseil de l'Europe précédent.

L'année 2016 a été consacrée à la rédaction du Plan de gestion 2016-2020. Le plan de gestion se compose de trois parties :

- Partie C : Evaluation du Plan de gestion 2011-2015

- Partie A : état des lieux et diagnostic général de la Réserve. Cette partie n'avait plus été entièrement actualisée depuis 1991. Les plans de gestion précédents reprenaient seulement la partie enjeux faune-flore-habitats. Cette année, le diagnostic a été entièrement actualisé.

- Partie B : Gestion de la Réserve. En se basant sur les enjeux définies à la partie A, cette partie permet de définir la vision à long terme de la Réserve, les Stratégies et Objectifs stratégiques à mettre en œuvre pendant les cinq ans du plan de gestion et au-delà, ainsi que la planification des actions conduisant à la réalisation des objectifs.

Ce plan de gestion a été validé par les instances de Gouvernance (Conseil de Direction et Conseil Scientifique) le 10 novembre 2016 et l'avis du Conseil Scientifique Régional du Patrimoine Naturel doit être donné le 30 novembre 2016.

**2. Recommandations :** Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

**1. Etudier la possibilité de réactiver la coopération avec d'autres sites deltaïques du Diplôme Européen (comme le parc de Doñana en Espagne ou la réserve de biosphère du delta du Danube en Roumanie)**

La coopération avec d'autres sites deltaïques du Diplôme européen n'a pas été réalisée jusqu'alors. Le manque de moyens humains (7.5 postes et aucun dédié à la coopération inter-site) et de moyens financiers (permettant une base pour des échanges) n'ont pas permis d'avancer sur ce sujet.

De plus, le Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue, acteur principal du delta camarguais, et porteur de la réserve de biosphère de Camargue est déjà en relation avec le Parc de Doñana et les Réserves de Biosphère du Danube notamment.

**2. Octroyer des moyens supplémentaires suffisants, tant financiers qu'humains, notamment au vu de la mise en place prochaine d'un périmètre de protection tel que prévu par la Loi du 10 juillet 1976 sur la conservation de la nature, pour garantir la gestion, la surveillance et le suivi scientifique de la réserve**

Le projet de périmètre de protection n'a finalement pas été validé par le conseil de direction de la réserve. En effet, le Conservatoire du littoral a proposé d'inclure les terrains limitrophes à la réserve dans sa stratégie d'acquisition 2014-2021, et de choisir préférentiellement la SNPN comme gestionnaire de tous ces secteurs. Dans ce cadre-là, un avenant à la convention de gestion a été signé en 2015 entre le Conservatoire et la SNPN pour la gestion actuelle (cogestion des « Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue », 6000 ha, et du site des « Grandes Cabanes du Vaccarès », 300 ha) et la gestion future des prochains secteurs du Vaccarès acquis par le Conservatoire. En 2016, un autre terrain limitrophe à la Réserve a été acquis par le Conservatoire, « Romieu ». Il s'agit de 60 ha essentiellement constitués d'une partie de l'étang du Vaccarès et de secteurs de roselières en bordure. Sans passer par le processus de création du périmètre de protection, la maîtrise foncière du Conservatoire et la gestion par la SNPN nous permettent de contrôler les activités réalisées sur ces sites, et donc de limiter les menaces s'exerçant sur la Réserve.

Une convention tripartite entre le Conservatoire du Littoral, la région PACA et le département des Bouches-du-Rhône permet d'allouer des financements à la gestion de ces terrains (en 2016, 15000€ ont été octroyés à la SNPN). Cette somme ne permet pas de pallier aux problèmes de moyens humains de la

structure. Des efforts supplémentaires sont à prévoir dans la recherche de financements. En 2016, l'Agence de l'eau nous a octroyé 80 000€ pour la rédaction du Plan de Gestion. Cela nous a permis d'embaucher une chargée d'étude pendant huit mois pour la rédaction du plan de gestion et également de réaliser des inventaires botaniques sur la Réserve.

La subvention accordée par l'Etat n'a quant à elle pas évolué depuis plus de 5 ans. Cette subvention avait été, à l'époque calculée sur la base de 7.5 Equivalent Temps Plein correspondant à des gardes en début de carrière. Aujourd'hui, ce calcul ne correspond plus à la réalité puisque l'équipe se compose de postes plus qualifiés (chargés de missions scientifiques) avec parfois plus de 20 ans d'ancienneté. A titre d'information, la Subvention de 480 786€ ne couvre pas les coûts réels de fonctionnement liés à 7.5 postes estimés aujourd'hui à 617 000€

### **3. Faire appliquer strictement la limitation des rejets d'eau d'origine agricole dans la réserve, notamment dans l'étang de Vaccarès, et poursuivre la collaboration avec les riziculteurs dans le respect des principes du développement durable en veillant à la mise en œuvre du programme d'actions à cinq ans comme convenu entre les différents acteurs**

*Un suivi réalisé par la SNPN depuis 2011 a pour objectif de faire un état des lieux actuel de la contamination de la réserve et de son impact éventuel, puis de mesurer l'effet de l'amélioration des pratiques agricoles dans les années à venir.*

*Les analyses sont réalisées par le laboratoire accrédité CARSO– Laboratoire Santé Environnement Hygiène de Lyon.*

*Elles concernent 666 substances chimiques, potentiellement polluantes, comprenant des pesticides, des métaux et métalloïdes, des HAP, des pesticides organochlorés, quelques autres substances organiques et des PCB, auxquelles s'ajoutent des molécules résultant des traitements fertilisants et des minéraux ainsi que les facteurs physico-chimiques. Les résultats sont confrontés aux données publiques de l'Agence de l'Eau RMC concernant le point d'échantillonnage « Rhône à Arles ».*

*Les résultats des analyses sont expertisés annuellement par des scientifiques spécialisés :*

*Hélène Roche, Marc Girondot, Université d'Orsay, Laboratoire Ecologie systématique et évolution (Paris Sud), Arnaud Elger, Université Toulouse III, Laboratoire Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Environnement, Patrick Höhener, Laboratoire de Chimie de l'Université de Provence.*

Ces cinq années de suivi mettent clairement en évidence la réalité et l'importance de la contamination des canaux de drainage par les pesticides et le transfert de ces polluants vers les étangs et lagunes de la réserve. Douze molécules interdites ont été détectées régulièrement (atrazine, lindane, propanil...) et d'autres, autorisées ou non pour la riziculture, à des concentrations très supérieures aux normes de qualité environnementales, en particulier dans les canaux de drainage (glyphosate/AMPA, dimethenamide, azoxystrobine, oxadiazon, flufenacet...).

En tout, ce sont plus de 60 contaminants (pesticides, HAP, micropolluants) qui ont été retrouvés dans les étangs et canaux de Camargue.

L'indicateur du SEQ Eau « somme des pesticides » met en évidence cette forte contamination des canaux de drainage (classés mauvais à très mauvais) et la contamination moyenne des étangs, en général plus contaminés que le Rhône.

A la demande de Monsieur le Préfet de Région PACA, un rapport a été réalisé, et plusieurs réunions ont été menées entre les services de l'Etat concernés (DREAL, Conservatoire du Littoral, DDTM, ONCFS, ONEMA, DRIR,...), notamment lors de MISEN. En 2016 une réunion sur les modalités d'actions à instaurer s'est tenue et nous a permis de soulever les problèmes d'actions de Police de l'eau en Camargue (sous effectifs ONEMA, ONCFS et manque de contrôles). Une rencontre entre la SNPN et les représentants de la Chambre d'agriculture et du Centre Français du Riz s'est tenue en novembre 2016,



permettant de présenter les enjeux de chacun et d'envisager les pistes d'actions communes ou concertées à réaliser à l'avenir.

#### **4. Engager des études pour la lutte biologique contre les espèces invasives, entre autres végétales, telles la Jussie (ou *Ludwigia peploides*) ou le Baccharis (*Baccharis Hamilifolia*) et octroyer les moyens nécessaires aux mesures de lutte mécanique ou manuelle**

Ces cinq dernières années, au moins cinq sujets de stages ont approché la question de la lutte contre les espèces invasives, notamment la Jussie (*Ludwigia peploides*) et le Baccharis (*Baccharis hamilifolia*). Ces stagiaires ont travaillé sur la cartographie de répartition de ces espèces envahissantes et sur leur arrachage, sur deux grands secteurs de la réserve, Amphise et la Capelière. Ces travaux ont permis d'éliminer de très nombreux individus et ainsi de limiter l'expansion de ces espèces, mais la dynamique de ces espèces étant très rapide, il est impératif de fournir un effort constant et régulier.

Un projet de restauration des milieux de la Capelière (site d'accueil du public de la Réserve) est mené depuis 2014. Ce projet permet de rouvrir les milieux de marais, et a pour objectif de retrouver les potentialités d'accueil des oiseaux d'eau sur ce secteur, afin d'améliorer l'attractivité pour le grand public. Cela passe essentiellement par de la lutte contre les espèces envahissantes (*Baccharis halimifolia*, *Fraxinus americana*...). Deux phases, financées par la Fondation du Patrimoine, la Région PACA, le Conseil Départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône et la SNPN ont été menées. Une dernière phase de travaux est prévue en 2017 et devrait permettre de finaliser le projet, notamment avec le montage d'un contrat Natura 2000 pour la restauration hydraulique du site.

#### **5. Mettre davantage en évidence le Diplôme européen et l'action du Conseil de l'Europe, particulièrement aux points d'accueil et sur les dépliants de la réserve**

Le diplôme européen est affiché depuis son octroi dans la salle d'accueil du public à la Capelière. Il est accompagné depuis 2015 de l'affiche anniversaire du diplôme correspondant à la réserve de Camargue, et le dépliant informant sur le diplôme est accessible sur place, en attendant la rénovation de l'ensemble de l'exposition dans les années à venir. Plusieurs autocollants ont été installés dans les lieux d'accueil du public. Le logo apparaîtra sur les dépliants et les panneaux lors des prochaines rééditions.

#### **6. Contrôler la fréquentation à la périphérie de la réserve**

Près de 48 000 personnes sont comptabilisées dans les trois sites d'accueil du public de la réserve (La Capelière, Salin de Badon, Phare de la Gacholle). On estime à environ 100 000 le nombre de personnes « pratiquant » la réserve. Il s'agit essentiellement de personnes profitant de la longue plage de sable d'une quinzaine de kilomètres qu'offre la réserve, bordée à l'est par les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, et à l'ouest par les plages de Beauduc, spot reconnu de camping sauvage et de kite-surf. Ces dernières années, plusieurs opérations ont permis de diminuer les problèmes liés à la fréquentation périphérique :

- une bonne communication avec la gendarmerie des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer et de Salin de Giraud, et les agents de la DDTM et du Conseil départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône

- la cogestion des plages de Beauduc (appartenant au site des « Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue » du Conservatoire du Littoral) ; En 2015, la fermeture de l'accès aux véhicules terrestres à moteur sur la plage « de la Comtesse », limitrophe de la réserve, a nettement diminué les impacts liés à ces véhicules. Ces effets s'observent également en 2016.

#### **7. Préparer un plan d'adaptation aux changements climatiques incluant l'élévation du niveau de la mer**

Le sujet de l'adaptation ou de l'atténuation lié aux changements climatiques est abordé dans le plan de gestion 2016-2020. La notion de gestion adaptative aux changements est intégrée. Dans ce cadre là, nous réalisons déjà depuis quelques années un suivi du trait de côte, un suivi de profils de plage et de dunes, permettant d'observer la dynamique littorale et l'évolution du niveau de la mer. Une autre série de relevés

systématiques par quadrillage (passereaux, flore, pédologie...) nous permet d'observer l'arrivée potentielle de nouvelles espèces, et les modifications des habitats.

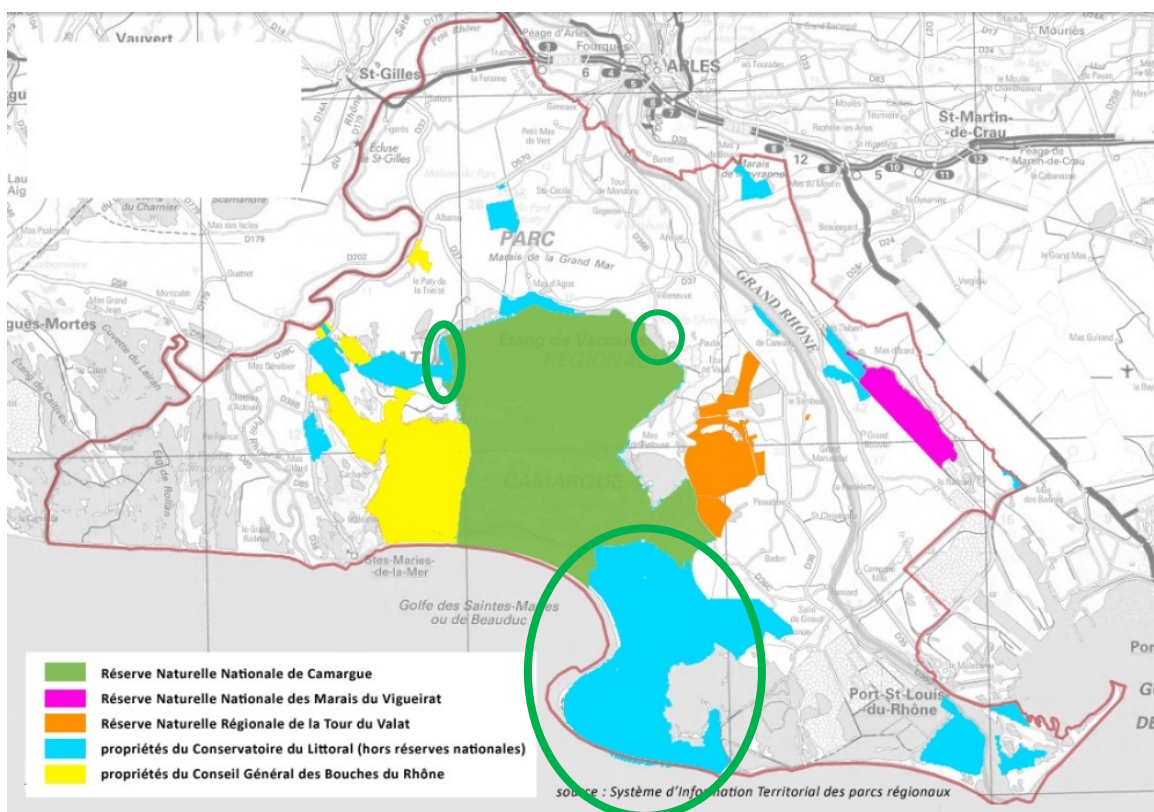
Dans le cadre de la cogestion des « Etangs et marais des Salins de Camargue », situé en limite sud-est de la réserve, nous avons récemment reçu le prix du Pôle relais lagunes méditerranéennes, récompensant la gestion adaptative réalisée sur le site. La SNPN, la Tour du Valat et le Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue, sur un site du Conservatoire du littoral, ont choisi d'accompagner l'évolution liée aux conséquences du changement climatique de ces milieux deltaïques particulièrement dynamiques. Ainsi, la gestion adaptative appliquée sur cet espace littoral vise un retrait maîtrisé et progressif du trait de côte et la reconnexion hydraulique et biologique des lagunes entre elles ainsi qu'avec la mer et l'étang du Vaccarès. Des rencontres entre gestionnaires et chercheurs de divers horizons (social, scientifique...) ont lieu et doivent aboutir à des sujets de recherche permettant une meilleure compréhension et une meilleure gestion face à ces changements climatiques.

**3. Gestion du site :** Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Depuis janvier 2015, Anaïs Cheiron est directrice de la Réserve. Initialement chargée de mission dans l'équipe gestionnaire, elle est remplacée au même poste par Benjamin Bricault. En 2016, Mireille Gibert, secrétaire de direction depuis plus de vingt ans à la Réserve est partie en retraite. Elle est remplacée par Maguelonne Portas.

**4. Frontières :** Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Les frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen n'a pas évolué. Cependant, la SNPN, gestionnaire de la réserve, est maintenant responsable de la gestion (ou de la cogestion) de sites en périphérie de la réserve (voir carte ci-après).



**Carte 1 :** La Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Camargue (en vert) et les autres espaces protégés dans le périmètre du Parc naturel régional de Camargue. Les trois cercles verts correspondent aux sites de Romieu, des Grandes Cabanes du Vaccarès et aux Etangs et Marais des Salins de Camargue, sites du Conservatoire du Littoral dont la gestion (ou la cogestion) est confiée à la SNPN

**5. Autres informations :** Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

## 14. FRANCE - ECRINS NATIONAL PARK

### 1. Conditions liées à l'obtention du diplôme

La résolution CM/ResDip(2010)14 relative au renouvellement du diplôme européen du Parc national des Écrins jusqu'au 17 juillet 2020, n'a pas été assortie de conditions, mais de 10 recommandations, rappelées au point « 2 » du présent rapport.

### 2. Suivi des recommandations

***Rec. 2.1. Conforter les partenariats avec les communes du parc, les intercommunalités et les projets de territoire afin de développer les synergies nécessaires à la réalisation d'une politique exemplaire de préservation du patrimoine dans une perspective de développement durable***

La charte du parc national des Écrins a été approuvée à l'unanimité de son Conseil d'administration le 9 mars 2012 et promulguée par décret en Conseil d'État du 28 décembre 2012 (JORF du 30/12/2012).

53 communes des 59 de l'aire optimale d'adhésion (89,8 %) ont adhéré à la charte (46 en 2016 et 7 en 2015). Le bilan définitif des adhésions est le suivant :

89,8 % d'adhésion

93,1 % de la surface totale du parc national (cœur + aire d'adhésion) maintenue

96,6 % de la population de la AOA dans des communes ayant adhéré à la charte

10,4 % de la surface de l'aire optimale d'adhésion présumée "perdue" du fait de la décision de six communes de ne pas adhérer.

Sur les 6 communes non adhérentes, 3 (Le Périer, Chantelouve et Champoléon) ont une partie de leur territoire dans le cœur. A une exception près (Valbonnais), les communes n'ayant pas adhéré sont des communes de moins de 200 habitants et toutes les communes de plus de 520 habitants ont adhéré à la charte (la taille médiane des communes étant d'environ 250 habitants), en particulier, toutes les communes importantes accueillant une station touristique d'envergure significative.

La charte est mise en œuvre à travers des programmes d'actions triennaux définis avec les partenaires. Dans le premier programme 2014-2016, les actions identifiées correspondent aux missions fondamentales du Parc dans la zone cœur et aux projets définis avec les collectivités et autres acteurs de l'aire d'adhésion. Le partenariat entre le Parc et les communes adhérentes est formalisé dans des conventions d'application de la charte. 46 conventions de partenariat ont été signées pour la période 2014-2016 ; le lancement de leur évaluation est engagé et se traduira par une série de réunions avec les communes concernées.

L'objectif pour la fin de l'année 2016 et le début de 2017 est de finaliser les conventions 2017-2019 avec toutes les communes adhérentes (51 comme suite aux fusions en cours), en vue de leur signature début 2017. Concernant les communautés de communes ou autres partenaires (par exemple, partenaires du tourisme, chambres consulaires) des démarches complémentaires seront engagées au 1er trimestre 2017 en fonction des priorités liées aux projets en cours

***Rec. 2.2. Renforcer les dispositifs de recueil permanent, de catalogage et de diffusion des données patrimoniales, avec une attention particulière aux données culturelles et celles relatives aux savoir-faire locaux, et rendre compte de l'expertise développée par le Parc et ses partenaires en application de la charte***

En 2016, le Parc national des Écrins a développé Biodiv'Ecrins, l'atlas en ligne de la faune et de la flore du parc. Ce nouvel outil en ligne présente l'ensemble des données collectées par le Parc national depuis sa création en 1973, soit plus de 500 000 données. Sur la fiche de chaque espèce, on retrouve la carte des observations, la répartition altitudinale et mensuelle, ainsi que des descriptions, photos, vidéos, audios et liens complémentaires.

Biodiv'Ecrins utilise l'outil [GeoNature-atlas](http://geonature.fr) développé par le Parc national des Écrins et publié sous licence libre. Il est ainsi transférable librement à d'autres structures qui souhaitent partager leurs observations naturalistes en se basant sur les référentiels nationaux de l'INPN. Il fait partie d'un ensemble d'outils développés par le Parc national et ses partenaires, pour pouvoir saisir, gérer et traiter les données des différents protocoles (<http://geonature.fr>).

L'opération « **biodiversité à tous les étages** » a été organisée sur la commune d'Embrun. Cette manifestation associant naturalistes et « grand public » a permis de faire découvrir les méthodes d'inventaire et la biodiversité de la commune d'accueil (<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/passion-partagee-etages>)

2016 a vu la poursuite du développement de la communauté « Geotrek », outil conçu et développé au départ par le PNE et libéré sous licence « open source » qui devient une référence nationale, et est actuellement utilisé par plus de 20 structures en France (Parcs nationaux, Parcs naturels régionaux, communautés de communes, Conseils départementaux, comités de la randonnée et du tourisme, etc.).

Le Parc national a continué d'animer la communauté des structures partenaires qui utilisent Geotrek et le font évoluer de manière collaborative en mutualisant les moyens, et a participé activement à l'organisation des « premières rencontres techniques des utilisateurs de Geotrek » aux côtés de l'ATEN. Ces rencontres, qui ont eu lieu le 18 octobre à Montpellier, ont regroupé plus de 60 organismes et ont posé la question de la gouvernance future en réseau de cet outil « communautaire » développé en « open source ».

Le Parc national des Écrins contribue au transfert des savoir-faire locaux en matière de restauration des patrimoines bâtis.

En 2017, il a accompagné de plusieurs façons les communes adhérentes :

- 23 communes ont bénéficié d'un conseil technique avant et pendant les travaux ou d'effectuer une demande d'aide financière (attribuée ou non) ;
- 3 communes ont bénéficié de stages techniques en construction de pierre sèche et taille de pierre.

***Rec. 2.3. Positionner le parc national comme sentinelle environnementale, au sein de réseaux d'acteurs institutionnels, en réponse à l'exigence d'observation permanente des changements associés au réchauffement climatique***

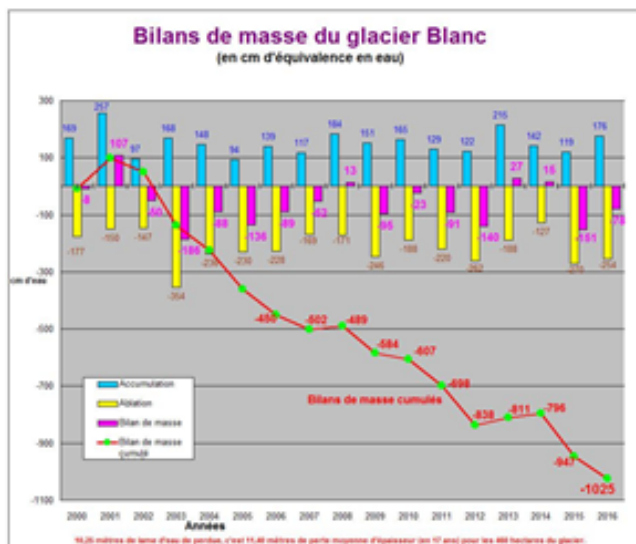
**S'agissant des glaciers,**

les températures élevées en fin d'été ont accéléré la fonte, malgré les bonnes accumulations de neige du printemps. Le dernier relevé réalisé le 30 septembre 2016 par les agents du groupe "glaciers" du Parc national des Écrins, a permis d'actualiser le diagramme de l'année 2016 pour le bilan de masse du glacier Blanc.

Malgré de bonnes accumulations de neige au printemps (en mai notamment), la fin de l'été a été marquée par des températures au-dessus de la moyenne, qui ont accéléré la fonte du glacier.

Ainsi, le bilan 2016 est plus mauvais que la moyenne de ces 15 dernières années (-78 cm d'eau pour -60 cm en moyenne). Il s'inscrit à la médiane des 16 premiers bilans de masse réalisés sur ce glacier.

Le tendance à la fonte persistante des glaciers ne se dément pas...



### Alpages sentinelles 2015-2018



Le séminaire « Alpages sentinelles » 2016 s'est tenu le 15 novembre au siège du Parc national des Ecrins

Le programme « Alpages sentinelles », dans son nouveau périmètre, est désormais piloté par l'IRSTEA.

Les actions prévues sur les Écrins en 2016 ont été réalisées : relevés de végétation sur les lignes de lecture, relevés des données météorologiques sur les alpages, communication des résultats, etc...

Le Parc national des Écrins continue de jouer un rôle essentiel dans le fonctionnement du réseau, notamment dans l'organisation de séminaires d'échange. C'est ainsi que les représentants des sept territoires et les scientifiques impliqués dans le programme étaient réunis à Gap le 15 novembre 2016, au siège du Parc national des Écrins, pour faire le point sur ce dispositif d'étude et de suivi, en lien avec les évolutions du climat.

***Rec. 2.4. Poursuivre, en lien avec les acteurs locaux, le développement de partenariats valorisant les missions d'appui méthodologique, d'évaluation et d'appui technique du Parc national, en vue de garantir l'insertion environnementale des activités***

Le PNE a fourni une expertise et un appui importants dans le domaine des systèmes d'information.

Ainsi y a-t-il eu des échanges importants avec les autres Parcs nationaux et Parcs naturels régionaux, et avec des associations comme le CREA (Centre de recherches sur les écosystèmes d'altitude) ou ASTERS (Conservatoire des espaces naturels de Haute-Savoie) et avec d'autres organismes de l'État, PGHM (peloton de gendarmerie de haute montagne) et l'ONCFS (Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage).

L'accompagnement technique du Parc national peut se traduire par des missions d'assistance à maîtrise d'ouvrage auprès des communes ou autres porteurs de projets. Il s'applique aussi bien à des projets d'aménagement et de valorisation d'espaces (places de village, site d'accueil en espaces naturels, etc.), qu'à des actions de restauration du patrimoine bâti vernaculaire, qui pour sa part participe à la qualité des paysages et à la vie des territoires.

C'est également sur le volet territorial, via les plans locaux d'urbanisme (PLU), que l'établissement public intervient dès les phases « amont » de l'élaboration, par des conseils techniques, juridiques et naturellement en apport d'expertises et de connaissances (paysages, patrimoines culturels et naturels).

Cet accompagnement est également constitutif d'un réseau avec d'autres partenaires et institutions qui traitent de ces domaines : direction départementale des territoires (DDT), service territorial de l'architecture et du patrimoine (STAP), conseil en architecture, urbanisme et environnement (CAUE), etc.

Variables en quantité d'une année sur l'autre, ces actions sont le résultat d'un partenariat actif avec le territoire, selon la conjoncture et les cycles institutionnels.

En 2016, 6 PLU ont fait l'objet d'un accompagnement, ainsi qu'une dizaine de projets d'aménagement ou de restauration patrimoniale.

***Rec. 2.5 Renforcer le partenariat avec l'Office national des forêts (ONF), les communes forestières et les gestionnaires de la forêt privée (Centres régionaux de la propriété forestière – CRPF) pour inciter à un meilleur échange de données et à la pratique d'une gestion forestière multi-fonctionnelle exemplaire***

Les échanges avec l'ONF se poursuivent, pour redéfinir une stratégie de gestion des sentiers en terrain domanial. Il s'agit en particulier de rendre opérationnelles les stratégies départementales de gestion des PDIPR et de clarifier les objectifs relatifs à l'entretien du réseau de sentiers en cœur de parc national.

Depuis la fin de l'été, les échanges laissent envisager un conventionnement à l'horizon 2017.

Le Parc national émet par ailleurs des avis réglementaires sur les documents de gestion des forêts situées dans le parc national : avis simple en aire d'adhésion, avis conforme au titre de la compatibilité avec la charte du parc en cœur.

Pour préparer les documents, l'établissement fournit aux partenaires des informations environnementales accompagnées de recommandations de gestion, qui portent essentiellement sur la prise en compte de deux grands éléments qui restent interdépendants :



- l'ancienneté des forêts : on traite ici de la gestion de la forêt à long terme, avec la notion de trame verte, d'îlots de vieux bois, de résilience des peuplements face aux modifications climatiques. On est ici dans le programme national de cartographie des forêts anciennes piloté par l'INRA de Nancy (Jean-Luc Dupouey) et suivi par Parcs nationaux de France.

- la maturité des peuplements : on traite ici d'enjeux plus concrets avec la prise en compte d'espèces, le maintien de micro-habitats sur les arbres, notamment sur les gros bois et sur le bois mort.

En 2016 :

- 6 avis ont été donnés, concernant les révisions d'aménagement forestier en cœur de parc national, et 1 avis relatif à des défrichements (avis comme suite à une consultation DDT) ;

- 10 porter à connaissance ont été réalisés.

Le PNE participe au protocole national piloté par RNF pour créer un "Observatoire au service d'une gestion équilibrée des forêts". Cet observatoire recueille des informations sur l'ancienneté et la maturité des peuplements forestiers. Le protocole sera décliné en 2017 sur les placettes forestières en réserve intégrale de Lauvitel.

***Rec. 2.6. Perfectionner les méthodes et les outils existants de suivi physionomique du territoire et les outils de sensibilisation, notamment en vue de dégager des axes d'action futurs et de sensibiliser les acteurs du territoire aux grandes évolutions des paysages***

Dans le cadre de sa politique d'animation et de prise en compte des enjeux environnementaux, l'établissement public a mis au point une méthode pour la prise en compte du paysage dans les projets d'aménagement et de gestion du territoire.

La boîte à outils « Motif Paysages » finalisée en 2014 est désormais le support de la démarche d'accompagnement des porteurs de projets et acteurs du territoire, par un apport structuré de connaissances et d'orientations en matière d'évolution des paysages et des usages associés. Elle contribue à de meilleures intégrations et prises en compte dans les projets et documents d'urbanisme, des milieux, des paysages et de connexions écologiques du territoire des Écrins.

En 2016, 3 communes ont souhaité adopter cette démarche pour conduire la révision du PLU. D'autres ateliers « Motif Paysages » sont d'ores et déjà programmés en 2017.

***Rec. 2.7. Etre particulièrement attentif au développement des diverses formes d'activités de loisirs et sportives, notamment en améliorant le suivi de la fréquentation en nombre de visiteurs et en sensibilisant les usagers à des pratiques plus respectueuses des espèces et des milieux***

### **Randonnée pédestre**

Le principal axe de travail en 2016 a été le programme « Grand Tour des Écrins » (<http://www.grand-tour-ecrins.fr>) visant la dynamisation d'une l'offre de randonnée itinérante. Ce projet, porté par le Parc national, a pour objectif le développement d'un tourisme doux et respectueux des patrimoines. Il intègre la réalisation de travaux d'entretien sur des sentiers situés en cœur de parc, la structuration et la valorisation d'offres de randonnée itinérante, ainsi que des actions de sensibilisation des pratiquants aux patrimoines du territoire.

### **Activités de haute-montagne**

Le Parc national a décidé d'aller au-delà de l'action déjà réalisé dans le cadre de la convention alpinisme en construisant un programme intitulé « Destination haute-montagne ». Certaines activités liées à la montagne sont en pleine essor, d'autres font l'objet de projets portés par les collectivités. Il nous semble aujourd'hui essentiel de voir comment le développement de ces activités peut s'articuler avec la protection

des milieux et espèces. En 2016, l'établissement a donc construit ce programme et déposé les demandes de subvention correspondantes pour sa mise en œuvre.

Sous réserve d'obtention des moyens escomptés, ce programme sera engagé en 2017.

### **Esprit parc national**

Le déploiement de la marque se poursuit avec l'ouverture de nouvelles catégories de produits et services (séjours, sites de visite, fruits et légumes, viande). La dynamique est très positive et permet de faire des prestataires marqués de véritables « ambassadeurs du parc ». Des formations sont organisées à leur attention. Les prestataires marqués sont en nombre croissant et 93 sorties de découverte sont labellisées.

***Rec. 2.8. Assurer le suivi des survols d'engins, motorisés ou non au coeur du parc et contenir les besoins en hélicoptage en engageant avec les alpagistes, les propriétaires et les exploitants des refuges, une réflexion concertée sur la nécessité de réduire les impacts sur les espèces et sur la naturalité des zones parcourues***

Pour la période de référence 1er janvier 2016 – 15 octobre 2016, globalement, le nombre d'autorisations de survol du cœur a connu une légère augmentation (+5 / cf infra) par rapport à l'année 2015. A noter que les survols relatifs aux ravitaillement des refuges d'une part, et au transport de cabanes hélicoptables d'autre part, ceux sont stabilisés.

Cette stabilité relative est liée à la sensibilisation des gardiens de refuges en début de saison ainsi qu'aux bonnes relations avec les sociétés d'hélicoptage qui ont permis de mutualiser les survols.

En revanche, on notera quelques survols supplémentaires pour travaux, concernant les refuges du CAF, du fait d'un vaste programme d'équipement en panneaux solaires en 2016, encouragé par l'établissement.

***Rec. 2.9. Poursuivre, en lien avec la stratégie nationale, les actions de coopération et de solidarité avec le monde rural afin de concilier au mieux le retour des grands prédateurs avec les activités pastorales***

En 2016, le parc national a été concerné par de nombreuses attaques de troupeaux. Les principales concernent les piémonts, en périphérie du massif, là où des meutes lupines sont installées.

Le cœur du parc n'est encore concerné que marginalement par ces attaques. Le bilan global des constats fait apparaître une inflexion par rapport à l'année précédente, aussi bien en nombre de constats réalisés que par rapport aux victimes indemnisées.



*Réalisation d'un constat de prédation en Vallouise*

Le conseil d'administration du 14 novembre 2014 a adopté un « plan d'action loup », après une large concertation interne et consultation du conseil scientifique. Ce plan sert de ligne directrice aux actions conduites dans ce domaine.



Le plan d'action Loup se décline de la manière suivante :

- appui à la mise en place de cabanes d'alpages permanentes ;
- conception d'une cabane « semi-permanente » d'un coût accessible ;
- renforcement du parc de cabanes héliportables (8 au total) et mise à disposition de ces cabanes en situation d'urgence l'été, comme suite à des attaques ;
- renforcement des moyens d'observation (pièges photos ; relevés d'indices...), transmission des données à l'ONCFS, et alerte des professionnels en cas d'observation fiable ;
- participation au groupe de travail piloté par le CEREMA visant à la conception d'un prototype de cabane secondaire (accueil d'un groupe de travail dédié les 3 & 4 novembre dans les Écrins, à Charance)
- renforcement des équipes de constat : emploi de deux vacataires « Loup » en appui aux équipes d'agents de terrain titulaires.

Comme suite au conseil d'administration du 1er juillet 2016, le Parc national a renforcé les actions de communication, pour une meilleure compréhension sur le terrain du rôle des agents et plus généralement de l'établissement public.

Par ailleurs, dans l'été 2016, le Parc national a réalisé une expérimentation visant à mettre à disposition des bergers de groupements pastoraux de Vallouise et du Fournel, les fréquences numériques du nouveau réseau radio du Parc national (hors fréquences sécurisées attribuées à l'équipe technique de l'établissement). Cette expérimentation a fait l'objet d'un bilan-évaluation le 19 octobre. Les retours très positifs conduisent à une demande de généralisation de l'expérimentation, pour laquelle un « plan d'action 2017 » sera formalisé en décembre 2016.

***Rec. 10. Finaliser la charte et par la suite réaliser son évaluation périodique, ainsi que celle des conventions et des programmes d'action pris en son application, et procéder à des ajustements si nécessaire.***

#### **Mise en place du dispositif d'évaluation de la charte**

Le dispositif d'évaluation de la charte du parc national des Écrins est en cours de construction. Le champ de l'évaluation concerne les actions réalisées dans le cadre des programmes triennaux avec les partenaires du territoire et les conditions de leur mise en œuvre.

Afin de s'articuler au mieux avec ces programmes, l'évaluation intermédiaire sera réalisée en 2020 sur la base des programmes d'actions 2014-2016 et 2017-2019. L'évaluation finale sera faite en 2027.

Le conseil d'administration du 5 juillet 2014 a créé le comité de suivi et d'évaluation de la charte, chargé de mettre en place le dispositif d'évaluation et d'assurer le suivi de la démarche. Ce comité, dont la composition définitive a été arrêtée le 1er juillet 2016, se réunira pour la première fois le 5 décembre 2016.

Une liste de questions évaluatives a été élaborée, fruit d'un groupe de travail interne à l'établissement (une personne par service et direction), de deux rencontres avec les représentants du conseil scientifique puis d'un avis du conseil scientifique du 16 octobre 2015.

Un travail est également en cours sur les indicateurs, qui permettront de mieux formaliser la réponse aux questions. Pour éviter toute lourdeur excessive, l'objectif est de voir dans quelle mesure les indicateurs renseignés dans le cadre du suivi du COB, de la CETD, du travail inter-parcs... peuvent permettre de répondre aux questions évaluatives, et à défaut de proposer d'autres indicateurs. Un tableau croisant les orientations/objectifs de la charte avec les différents indicateurs existants ou mentionnés dans la charte a été réalisé.

Le logiciel EVA, outil de suivi et d'évaluation des chartes des parcs nationaux, valorisera les indicateurs de suivi des actions et ceux de la charte.

En 2016, pour le compte du collectif des Parcs nationaux, un travail a été réalisé en interne transférer des informations du programme d'actions du PNE déjà capitalisées vers EVA.

Un premier bilan du programme d'actions 2014-2016 sera réalisé fin 2016 à l'aide d'EVA.

**Les étapes à venir** sont les suivantes :

- première réunion du comité de suivi et d'évaluation de la mise en œuvre de la charte : 5 décembre 2016

Cette première réunion sera l'occasion de présenter la démarche de construction du dispositif d'évaluation, les questions évaluatives et le travail en cours sur les indicateurs. Au delà de la validation du dispositif en lui-même, la question sera posée de faire de l'évaluation et du suivi de la charte, un outil de dialogue et d'échange sur le territoire ;

- présentation au Conseil économique, social et culturel : hiver 2016 ;

- bilan du 1er programme d'actions 2014-2016 de mise en œuvre de la charte : présentation au 1er conseil d'administration de 2017 ;

- finalisation du dispositif d'évaluation (indicateurs, état initial et cibles...) : 1er trimestre 2017.

### **3. Gestion du site**

2016 est la première année pleine de mise en œuvre du second volet de la réorganisation de l'établissement public.

La fusion effective des anciens secteurs a donné lieu à l'organisation de terrain suivante :

4 secteurs couvrant géographiquement le territoire, animés chacun par une équipe secteur :

- Champsaur-Valgaudemar (implantations du Champsaur et du Valgaudemar),
- Oisans-Valbonnais (implantations de l'Oisans et du Valbonnais),
- Briançonnais-Vallouise (implantations du Briançonnais et de la Vallouise),
- Embrunais.

Par ailleurs, s'agissant non plus de l'établissement public, mais du parc national dans son ensemble, on notera l'engagement en mars 2016 du Parc national des Écrins dans le processus de labellisation internationale « Liste verte », piloté par l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature.

A la suite d'un premier audit de terrain le 24 août, de la consultation en ligne du dossier de candidature et d'un examen en groupe de travail liste verte de l'UICN – France, le dossier a été transmis à l'UICN internationale avec un avis très favorable. Le résultat de cette demande de labellisation internationale est attendu pour le premier trimestre de 2017

### **4. Frontières**

Le conseil d'administration du 14 décembre 2015 a entériné l'adhésion à la charte de 7 nouvelles communes, portant à 53 le nombre de communes ayant adhéré à la charte du parc national. Le bilan définitif des adhésions est rappelé au point 2.1. du présent rapport.

D'autres évolutions sont en cours, notamment des projets de fusion de communes, dont la confirmation est attendue vers la fin 2016.

### **5. Autres informations**

Comme suite aux délibérations favorables des communes de Le Monétier–Les Bains, Villar-d’Arène et Pelvoux (2013), les contacts sont établis avec les services de l’État et le ministère de l’environnement, en vue d’anticiper la préparation des dossiers d’enquête publique.

Il s’agit, en application de la mesure 3.2.3. de la charte, « de gérer les réserves naturelles nationales contiguës au cœur du parc et envisager leur évolution » d’intégrer en cœur de parc national, les réserves naturelles du « Torrent de Saint-Pierre » et des « Versants nord des pics du Combeynot ».

La procédure est relancée comme suite à l’avis d’opportunité favorable du 20 juin 2016 de la Ministre de l’environnement. Cette procédure d’intégration des deux réserves naturelles nationales en cœur de parc national se traduira notamment par une enquête publique programmée à l’entrée de l’été 2017.

#### Communication à propos du diplôme Européen

Le logo du diplôme Européen est publié de manière permanente sur le site Internet du Parc national dans différentes pages :

- L’information sur l’obtention du diplôme Européen – en 1990 - dans la partie présentant l’histoire du Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/historique-les-dates-clefs>

- L’explication de l’expertise dans le cadre du diplôme européen qui lui a été octroyé par le Conseil de l’Europe depuis 1990, dans le page Internet traitant du fonctionnement du Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/fonctionnement-du-parc-national>

- L’actualité sur le renouvellement, en 2005, du diplôme européen octroyé par le Conseil de l’Europe au Parc national : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/diplome-europeen-des-espaces-protoges>

- Une actualité à l’occasion du renouvellement du diplôme en 2010 : <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/le-diplome-europeen-renouvele>

Le diplôme originel signé en 1990 est présenté dans une vitrine permanente à l’entrée de l’accueil grand public du siège du Parc national à Gap.

Une information sur le diplôme Européen est effectuée dans les rapports d’activités réalisés chaque année par l’établissement public du parc national.

## **15. FRANCE – VANOISE NATIONAL PARK**

**1. Conditions :** Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l’octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

*Déterminer une aire d’adhésion cohérente sur le plan de la conservation des valeurs naturelles, en particulier celles du cœur du parc.*

Le décret actant la charte du parc national de la Vanoise a été signé par Madame la ministre de l’Écologie pour le Premier Ministre le 27 avril 2015. Le préfet de région a saisi les 29 communes de l’aire optimale d’adhésion pour délibération sur leur adhésion du 1er juin au 30 septembre, elles-mêmes prenant préalablement l’avis des intercommunalités concernées. Ces dernières ont toutes émis un avis défavorable à l’adhésion des communes, sauf celle de « Cœur de Tarentaise ». Puis, 27 communes sur 29 ont refusé d’adhérer à la charte, hormis les communes de Peisey-Nancroix et de Saint-Martin-de-Belleville.

Le périmètre du parc national de la Vanoise est par conséquent dorénavant constitué par arrêté préfectoral régional du 6 octobre 2015, au moins jusqu’à l’échéance d’une nouvelle adhésion possible par les communes concernées dans trois ans, du cœur du parc national, ainsi que de la partie des deux communes précitées située hors cœur du parc. Indépendamment de cette adhésion, la commune de Saint-Martin-de-Belleville a fusionné avec une autre commune située hors aire d’adhésion optimale du parc national pour

constituer une nouvelle collectivité dénommée « Les Belleville ». Cette fusion ne remet toutefois pas en question son adhésion à la charte du parc national ni ne modifie le périmètre de l'aire d'adhésion.

**2. Recommandations :** Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

*1. Veiller à bien prendre en compte les enjeux naturels et paysagers lors d'aménagements en zone périphérique et éviter tout impact direct sur le cœur*

Les travaux dans le cœur du Parc font l'objet d'une autorisation. La plupart de ces autorisations de travaux ont fait l'objet, au préalable, d'une visite sur le terrain ou d'un contact avec le pétitionnaire afin de mieux appréhender les travaux envisagés.

Jusqu'à la phase d'adhésion des communes, l'établissement s'engageait dans la mise en œuvre des procédures d'aménagement de manière à identifier depuis l'amont du projet les enjeux environnementaux et paysagers dans toute l'aire optimale d'adhésion qui entoure le cœur du Parc. Depuis la constitution de l'aire d'adhésion à l'automne 2015, le périmètre de compétences de l'établissement en la matière est limité à l'aire d'adhésion effective. L'établissement poursuit son engagement pour assurer la préservation du cœur de parc. Le Parc national a signé en 2014 une convention avec plusieurs grands domaines skiables pour la fourniture de données naturalistes afin de créer des observatoires environnementaux des stations.

Un programme Life Gypaète a été obtenu avec d'autres espaces protégées afin de mieux protéger cette espèce et les tétraonidés en aire d'adhésion. Les premières actions ont été menées en 2015.

Par ailleurs, le Parc met à disposition un outil d'observatoire photographique des paysages de manière à sensibiliser et à proposer des éléments de réflexion.

*2. coordonner la compatibilité des objectifs du cœur du parc et de l'aire d'adhésion optimale avec ceux de la « trame verte et bleue »*

En France, « la trame verte et bleue » se décline régionalement dans un document-cadre, le schéma régional de cohérence écologique (SRCE), le Parc national de la Vanoise ayant été impliqué lors de son élaboration. La charte du Parc national de la Vanoise précise dans son § 3.5.1 son rôle d'accompagnement des collectivités locales dans ce domaine. Plusieurs mesures de la charte vont dans le sens de la prise en compte des corridors écologiques. Associé à l'élaboration du SCOT Tarentaise dans lequel la trame verte et bleue sera déclinée, le Parc a donné un avis favorable au document en juin 2016 lors au cours d'une consultation préalable à l'enquête publique.

*3. assurer la pleine prise en compte des intérêts de la protection de la nature et du paysage lors d'arbitrages au sujet des ressources en eau et du renouvellement des concessions hydro-électriques*

Le Parc national de la Vanoise n'a pas été sollicité en 2016 pour une demande d'avis relative à d'éventuels projets liés à la ressource en eau ou des concessions hydro-électriques.

*4. poursuivre activement les mesures de diagnostic et de gestion permettant d'assurer une cohabitation harmonieuse et une synergie entre les usages agricoles du parc et la protection des valeurs naturelles*

Neuf nouveaux plans de gestion pastoraux ont été réalisés en 2016, dont sept qui ont fait l'objet d'un engagement contractuel des éleveurs dans le cadre d'une Mesure AgroEnvironnementale et Climatique (MAEC). A l'issue des deux campagnes de contractualisation 2015-2016, 22 alpages du Parc se sont ainsi engagés pendant cinq ans à adapter leurs pratiques pour une meilleure prise en compte des enjeux environnementaux. Parallèlement, le Parc a poursuivi son implication auprès de la commune des Belleville pour la mise en place de baux ruraux à clauses environnementales sur les alpages

communaux.

Le Parc est également impliqué dans la mise en œuvre du plan national loup et l'accompagnement des éleveurs face aux dommages : suivi de l'espèce, réalisation des constats d'attaques, mise à disposition d'abris d'urgence, hélicoptages pour l'approvisionnement de matériel...

Un partenariat est en préparation avec le Centre d'Études techniques et d'expertises sur les Risques, l'Environnement, la Mobilité et l'Aménagement (CEREMA) pour réaliser un prototype de cabane pastorale mobile mieux adapté aux conditions de vie en altitude et en espace protégé. Les parcs nationaux des Écrins et du Mercantour seront associés à ce partenariat.

Dans le cadre des convention d'application de la charte, le Parc est également investi dans plusieurs projets agricoles sur les communes adhérentes :

- à Peisey-Nancroix : projet collectif de méthanisation des effluents agricoles (organisation d'une visite collective, participation à l'étude de faisabilité...);
- aux Belleville : création d'un conservatoire de l'abeille noire locale *Apis mellifera mellifera*, avec le Centre d'Etudes Techniques Apicoles de Savoie (appui scientifique, mise en réseau...) / étude de préfiguration pour la création d'une maison thématique dédiée à l'abeille noire.

*5. maintenir un équilibre entre les fonctions d'accueil et de services des refuges et refuges-portes d'une part, leur rôle en matière d'information et de sensibilisation d'autre part, en poursuivant les aménagements*

en faveur de catégories de visiteurs qui méritent une attention particulière, comme les handicapés

Le Parc national de la Vanoise est propriétaire de 16 refuges dans le cœur du Parc pour permettre l'accueil et la sensibilisation du grand public. Dans les vallées, les agents proposent différentes animations de sensibilisation. Les points information Vanoise ouverts durant toute la durée estivale sont des sources de renseignement pour l'ensemble de la population. Des expositions sont ouvertes au public, de la documentation est mise à disposition. La brochure « Refuges en familles » éditée en 2014 avec le Comité de Savoie des clubs alpins et de montagne (CAF) a conjointement été rééditée en 2016.

Le Parc national de la Vanoise a également obtenu en 2016 la marque "Tourisme et Handicap" pour la maison du parc de Pralognan-la-Vanoise pour les quatre familles de déficiences (motrice, visuelle, auditive et mentale). La maison complète l'offre des trois refuges-portes du parc déjà labellisés. L'ensemble des bâtiments, site et promenade accessible aux différentes familles de handicap ont été décrits dans une brochure sur l'accessibilité adaptée. Cette brochure permet d'informer et de promouvoir cette offre. En sus, le Parc national de la Vanoise a assuré un programme de sorties adaptées aux déficiences motrices, visuelles et mentales en partenariat avec les associations représentatives. Une quarantaine de personnes en situation de handicap ont ainsi pu être accompagnées par des gardes-moniteurs.

*6. surveiller et réglementer de façon stricte les sports aériens pour limiter les effets négatifs sur la faune.*

Le cœur du Parc fait l'objet d'une réglementation spécifique encadrant strictement le survol par tous les moyens. La charte du Parc et ses modalités d'application de la réglementation en cœur de parc réitère cette protection en aménageant toute fois quelques zones bien précises où le survol en parapente est autorisé de manière à permettre un développement harmonieux de l'activité. Les survols en hélicoptère sont interdits sauf autorisation expresse et restent rares, principalement pour l'approvisionnement des refuges en début de saison.

**3. Gestion du site :** Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

La stratégie scientifique à 15 ans a été approuvée par le Conseil d'administration du 23 novembre 2016. Elle sera déclinée début 2017 dans une feuille de route à 3-4 ans. Les programmes alpages sentinelles et lacs sentinelles pour l'observation à long terme du changement climatique sont poursuivis et il est envisagé de les étendre au Gran Paradiso. Des projets sont aussi en réflexion pour transposer les transects de suivi existants dans le Gran Paradiso, en Vanoise et plus largement dans les Alpes. Le projet « Alpgrain » s'est achevé et se poursuit par le projet « Sem'lesAlpes ». Le suivi en cours autour du refuge de l'Arpont en cœur de parc s'est prolongé en 2016.

En fonction de l'évolution des connaissances (par exemple la découverte de nouvelles espèces sur son territoire) et de l'évolution des méthodes d'évaluation des patrimoines (travaux du Réseau de Conservation de la Flore Alpes-Ain), le Parc national de la Vanoise a poursuivi en 2016 ses actions pour la conservation de la flore remarquable. Les espèces dont la priorité de conservation est évaluée au niveau "majeure" ou "très élevée" font l'objet de suivis pour tenter de connaître l'évolution des populations. Parmi les espèces étudiées en 2016, figure *Trifolium saxatile*, espèce inscrite sur la directive "Habitats-faune-flore", et *Astragalus leontinus* dont toutes les populations françaises actuellement connues sont localisées en Vanoise. Le Parc national s'applique également à mieux connaître certaines parties méconnues de son patrimoine comme les bryophytes. Les actions sont ciblées sur la connaissance des espèces protégées (*Buxbaumia viridis*, *Riccia breidlerii*), l'établissement de la liste des espèces présentes sur le Parc et de l'évaluation de la responsabilité du Parc pour leur conservation. En matière de préservation des milieux rares et menacés, le Parc a participé en 2016 à une étude menée à l'échelle du massif alpin sur les ripisylves de montagne. L'objectif étant de mieux caractériser ces milieux souvent dominés par des saules et de déterminer les priorités d'actions sur de solides arguments scientifiques.

En 2016, une nouvelle baisse de la subvention pour charges de service public (SCSP) du Ministère de tutelle, conjuguée avec la stagnation de frais de personnel, a conduit à de nouvelles réductions du budget de fonctionnement général du Parc et en particulier sur les crédits consacrés aux actions. Les crédits pour les actions liées au Contrat d'objectifs (COB) ont ainsi diminué de 44 % de 2012 à 2015 réduisant véritablement la capacité d'intervention de l'établissement et la possibilité d'accrocher des crédits externes du fait d'un autofinancement insuffisant. En corollaire, 3 ETP (équivalents temps-pleins) ont été supprimés en 2016 et les contrats saisonniers des hôtesses d'accueil ont été réduits, le Ministère de tutelle ayant pris acte de la réduction du territoire d'action du Parc, dorénavant limité au cœur et à l'aire d'adhésion constituée par les parties hors cœur des deux seules communes adhérentes à la charte.

**4. Frontières :** Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Le territoire du Parc a été réduit, à l'issue de l'adhésion des communes à la charte, au périmètre inchangé du cœur (533 km<sup>2</sup>) et à l'aire d'adhésion constituée par les parties hors cœur (208 km<sup>2</sup>) des deux seules communes adhérentes à la charte, Peisey-Nancroix et Les Belleville, soit 741 km<sup>2</sup> au lieu des 2.000 km<sup>2</sup> antérieurement avec l'aire optimale d'adhésion.

**5. Autres informations :** Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

*néant*

## 16. GEORGIA – VASHLOVANI PROTECTED AREAS

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

Pastureland management plan is already developed and is in process.

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. Prepare and implement a programme to maintain and renovate field equipment and the infrastructure for tourists and visitors- **New bathrooms and toilettes are built in the area of “Bungalow village”.**

2. Develop and fund an operational and comprehensive monitoring programme of the Diploma area; this programme should be focused on the specific natural and landscape features of the Diploma area and the anthropogenic pressures on it- **Generating ideas with the stakeholders regarding operational and monitoring programme.**

3. Pursue, update and complement inventories and mapping of species and habitats (distribution, abundance, state of conservation and tendencies), taking into account the Emerald Network’s standards and requirements- **The list of species and habitats, as well as monitoring is being held continuously according to standards.**

4. Secure the Vashlovani Protected Areas core budget, from internal sources preferably, and provide funding to ensure that the 2013-19 management plan is fully implemented- **Vashlovani Pas core budget is secured, implementation of the activities through the Management plan is done accordingly**

5. Start the process of drafting the next management plan in a timely manner, so that the whole award period of the European Diploma for the Vashlovani Protected Areas is covered- **The process of drafting the next management plan has been started**

6. Improve further the expertise and skills of the staff members, especially in the field of ecology and the knowledge and monitoring of species- **Trainings of the staff held several times in 2016.**

7. Continue and develop cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores- **Developed**

2. **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 important changes has been done since the last annual report was submitted.

3. **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.

The demarcation of the borders had been conducted.

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

1. The sharp rise in the number of visitors and revenues

2. The presentations for schools, NGOs, and other interested persons/organizations are permanently held
3. Georgian, as well as foreign journalists and scientists are visiting VPA.
4. Several documentaries about Vashlovani were made during 2016

## 17. GERMANY - BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK

**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.

Due to the intensive bark beetle control in the bark beetle management zone, the infestation is on a low level since 2012. In total 1800 m<sup>3</sup> of timber cut in the national park in 2016. It was mainly spruce from windthrow and bark beetle infestation, classified as potential breeding material for the bark beetle whereof approx. 1100 m<sup>3</sup> were debarked and left on forest site. The high proportion of debarked wood, left on the poor sites, is necessary due to sustainable site fertility and for deadwood restricted organisms.

The forest gaps were used to re-establish mixed forests with planted Silver fir (18.500) and European beech (11.300) on 11.4 ha. Additionally, the forest conversion was continued by establishing small scale patchy gaps in young pure spruce stands.

Regulation of game within the management zone of the National Park is of outstanding importance to enable the rejuvenation of close to nature forest types and conversion of unnatural spruce forests. Therefore, game control will be still enforced in 2017 and the following years. For an even more differentiated management, the existing monitoring system was improved in 2016.

The updating of the forest development plan started in 2016. It focusses on areas of the management zone in which an active management (inclusive game regulation) is necessary at all. The bark beetle dynamic as driver for the forest conversation is included. Also a lot of topics of nature protection will be integrated like the enhancement of habitats of protected species.

**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. Prepare and adopt by 2012 a new management plan including quantitative objectives to be reached during the next period, and to this effect provide the necessary financial and human resources.**

The management plan is not done, yet. The main reason is the bad stuff situation with lots of changes during the last years. Since March 2016 there is a new head of the planning subject group and so the work on the management plan is going to speed up. Some important bricks of the plan are already done or we are working on it. For example some concepts for visitor guidance (negotiated agreement with climbers).

**2. Include in the plan provision for continuing a comprehensive long term research programme, in close collaboration with other alpine protected areas and other relevant networks.**

no significant changes to 2015, activities ongoing

**3. Prepare sectoral plans for activities and the use of resources that are compatible with conservation objectives, as integrated parts of the new management plan and taking into account the background of climate change; special attention should given to:**

a) **Military activities;**



Since September 2014 there is a common agreement with the federal police, which has its training center at Kühroint in the National Park. The agreement says - both partners have to respect and support the work of each other. So, we try to get the military use in a compatible way with nature protection.

**b) recreation and the promotion of nature tourism, in co-operation with the mountain guide organization; providing specific training courses for the guides**

**Cooperation and visitor management**

The strong cooperation with partners in the region (protected areas as well as relevant stakeholders of different sectors - especially the German Alpine Club) which was built up during the last years had and has a great potential to contribute to the conservation of alpine biodiversity. So for nature friendly winter sport activities we work together with the German Alpine Club in the project "Natürlich auf Tour" which is a campaign for visitor management and sensitization. Together with the German Alpine Club and partners from the tourism sector we worked out a network of routes for snowshoeing furthermore to canalize the impact of snowshoe hikers.

The cooperation with stakeholders such as paragliders, climbers and helicopter-associations has been extended successfully. The cooperation-project "Kletterkonzept" will enable a positive side by side of climbing and nature protection. Together with the German Alpine Club, the mountain rescue service, the mountain guide union and some single climbers we defined the content of the project. This should be a good base for the cooperation in the future.

**Golden Eagle monitoring program**

In 2016 fourteen territorial couples of Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, L.) have been monitored in the observation area of *Biosphere reserve Berchtesgadener Land and surrounding mountain regions*. Six fledged young have been documented. This means a breeding success of 0.4 young per pair and year respectively. Successful couples have been *Bluntau*, *Hoher Göll*, *Untersberg*, *Ettenberg*, *Sonntagshorn* and *Blühnbach*. The overall breeding success during 23 years of monitoring (1993 – 2016) is still 0.30 young / pair / year.

There was no successful double-breed in 2016, but four breed interruptions (before fledging) in the eagle territories of *Hochkranz*, *Wimbach*, *Klausbach* and *Saalach*. The reason for breeding-interruption could not be detected. Disturbances caused by human activities as a reason for interruption are not known and couldn't be observed. In two territories there are no clear results concerning breeding success. Number of non-breeders in 2016 was two.

In 2016 only two territories (*Gotzen and Hoher Staufen*) were not occupied by a territorial pair. Documentation of young after leaving the nest took place in territory *Blühnbach*. Dead territorial eagles could not be found / documented as well as no change in pair consumption. Number of visitors attending guided tours (environmental education items) increased slightly from 1,129 (53 events) in 2014 to 1,138 (70 events) in 2015. The probability of golden eagle sightings during the guided tours is up to 90 %.

**c) visitor infrastructures, trail marking, usage and maintenance of mountain huts**

In 2016, nearly 400.000 Euro and 7500 hours had been invested in road and path maintenance.

**d) mountain grazing during summer, including water supply**

Action has been taken to adapt the grazing management to recent scientific findings. Collaboration with Mr. Steinberger from ALF (State department of agriculture and forestry).

**e) water resources management, taking into account the needs of the surrounding communities**

In 2016 the alpine hut "Wasseralm" got a biological clarification plant, thereby the last service hut got a special wastewater treatment.

Again the local authority of Berchtesgaden had to control cliffs in the wimbach valley because of falling rocks, which might endanger the water supply of Berchtesgaden. The national park administration supported them and attended the drone fly, which has been necessary for this analysis.

Additionally the slope of the wimbach river is crossed by the Berchtesgaden water supply line.

Seven block groynes have been built in order to prevent the slopes from sliding and to protect the water supply line.

**4. consequently pursue the transformation of spruce forests into mixed forests until the integration of the intervention zone into the**

see 1. Conditions

**5. continue targeted interventions to control the bark beetle proliferation, but without enlarging the bark beetle management zone, and maintain wildlife pressure at an acceptable level;**

see 1. Conditions

**6. anticipate and foster the natural return of large carnivores in the park area and communicate with the public about the benefits this may bring; develop a strategy and action plan to deal with this issue, including cattle protection measures and the training of shepherds;**

Berchtesgaden National Park is aware of its responsibility for the management of large carnivores and for the preparation of the public for their return. We are therefore in close cooperation with local livestock farmers as well as with the authority (Landesamt für Umwelt) responsible for wildlife management in Bavaria to ensure that all activities are embedded into the Bavarian strategy and in the management plans applying to the respective species. Especially because of the extraordinary mobility and the large territories of lynx, wolf and bear a singular action plan for Berchtesgaden National Park seems not be constructive.

The focus is definitely not on pointing out advantages or disadvantages originating from the return of large carnivores. In fact, the encouragement of a common responsibility of all stakeholders involved, based on the legal foundations is the primer aim. This strategy shall enable people, who are directly affected to endure the impact of lynx, wolf and bear and offer them approaches and thereby a perspective.

**7. Pursue the collaboration with the Austrian Administration and the Nature Park, the Biosphere Reserve and the Natura 2000 network, promote exchanges with other alpine protected areas.**

**International cooperation**

**Special visits:**

28.04.2016	Landesrat Dr. Theiner South Tirol
16.05.2016	Visit of a delegation from Korea
26. – 29.05.2016	Meeting of the council and board of NABU eV. Germany
07.06.2016	Visit of a class of Polish pupils
09.06.2016	National Institute of Forest Science, Korea
21.07.2016	Visit of a delegation from the 7 Himalayan countries, organized by GIZ
05.08.2016	Visit of a delegation from an University of Ukraine
22. – 25.08.2016	Three-part documentary by RTR Schweizer Fernsehen
05. – 06.09.2016	Documentary about the National Park by National Geographic
21.09.2016	Visit of the commissioner for handicapped persons of the Bavarian Government

22. – 24.09.2016 First Conference on Alpine Climate

**Partner Yosemite National Park**

Since November 2014 we are Sister-Park of Yosemite National Park. The parks are quite different in size and history, but similar in characteristic and biodiversity.

In 2016 the leading staff of the national park administration visited its partners from Yosemite National Park to promote knowledge sharing. During this stay the agreement of co-operation has been prolonged.

**8. Information buildings**

The central information center “Haus der Berge” in Berchtesgaden has about 540.000 visitors since opening in May 2013 (October 2016). In 2016 we counted 150.000 visitors until end of October. This huge number of visitors is not a single result of the attractiveness of the exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” but also of the utilization of the building as a meeting place for the public. The intensive evaluations of the exhibitions in 2014 and 2015 showed the effectiveness as well as the sustainability of various methods to communicate the main messages and goals of the National Park. There are still some topics and items which have to be improved in order to optimize environmental education and information.

Until November 2016 we implemented some new attractions into the exhibition, for example new showcases (fruits, leaves and flowers of typical trees) in the exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” as well as monitors with permanent running films concerning the four main habitats in the park during the seasons. The relief in the foyer of the information centre has been improved as well. Additionally some new preparations and a new cave for the skeleton of a cave bear have been implemented in the exhibition. The exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” has been visited by almost 60.000 persons in 2016 (October 2016).

The five peripheral information centers of the National Park are even in a permanent process of improvement.

The new exhibition in the information center Hintersee will be opened in December 2016. The main topics of the exhibition are alpine pastures and Golden Eagle – especially in the Klausbach valley. This makes sure, that all four main habitats (water, forest, alpine pastures, rocks) of the National Park are topic of the “Haus der Berge” in common as well as in the peripheral centers for a regional context. Linked to the exhibition the eagle watching station at the Klausbach valley will be opened in December, too. Next is the renewal of the exhibition infopoint St. Bartholomä, which main topic supposed to be water.

**9. public transportation system**

All of the meeting points of our guided tours can be reached with public transportation and we refer to public transportation at the hiking tips on our website. We are partner of the co-operation “Fahrziel Natur” which fosters the use of public transportation to reach nature

**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.

The Berchtesgaden National Park uses the European Diploma logo on its website. It is also presented in our new National Park brochure.

## **18. GERMANY - LÜNEBURG HEATH NATURE RESERVE**

**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.

**There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma (see Resoultion CM/ResDip(2015)5.**

**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. Pursue a reduction, or at least a limitation to no more than the current amount, of the concession of ground-water extraction and co-ordinate the ground-water extraction for irrigation on farmland technically and quantitatively with the activities and infrastructure of Wasserwerke Hamburg; carry out additional studies and monitoring in order to collect more information about the influences of all kinds of water extraction on species and ecosystems; and simulation modelling should be undertaken for all factors possibly influencing the groundwater level, the soil, the streams, the different types of vegetation including forests, the biotopes of red-list-species, and the natural dynamic of the whole ecosystem;

**The extending of groundwater lifting was not legalised by the district of Harburg, Lower Saxony, because of the unforeseeable impact on water and nature conservation. Therefore the amount of legal groundwater lifting was set to 12.1 million m<sup>3</sup> instead of 18.4 million m<sup>3</sup>. A fund to increase actions for renewing groundwater was established.**

2. Pursue political recognition of the VNP's Lüneburger Heide Nature Reserve (NLH) and increase the public funding to the same level as that provided to Federal Nature Parks

**The Ministry of the Environment of Lower Saxony established a committee for the further development of "large scale nature reserves" ("Großschutzgebiete", like National parks, Biosphere reserves and large scale nature reserves such as Lüneburger Heide). Verein Naturschutzpark Lüneburger Heide (VNP) is a member of this institution. VNP wishes an equal treatment of "Lüneburger Heide nature reserve" and National parks such as "Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer" or Biosphere Reserves such as "Elbtalaue", where ranger services, monitoring, environmental education and nature information facilities are financed by the State of Lower Saxony. The standing committee is supposed to finish work on new guidelines concerning financing of large scale nature reserves in 2017. The European Union will supervise the process for the new guidelines.**

3. Reconsider the ongoing practice of agricultural funding and pursue recognition of all types of heathland cultivation and all heathland restoration activities as a kind of "green land cultivation" with the same amount of funding, especially during the EU-funding period 2013-2020

**In 2015 heathland (*Calluna* dominated heath land habitats on sandy soil) was included in the list of agricultural land defined by the EU. For the first time farmers and shepherds,**

who manage heathland, are authorised to payment entitlements and are allowed to apply for the European single payment scheme.

There are still two negative aspects concerning heathland as part of the agricultural subsidy system.

Heathland farmers who apply for the single payment scheme lose their grants for agri-environment measures (e.g. sheep grazing nature conservation schemes). This is a severe discrimination of heathlands in comparison to grassland and arable land.

The second problem concerning heath land as agricultural land is the so called “100 tree rule”. Heath lands are only considered as agricultural land in Lower Saxony, if there are less than 100 trees growing per hectare. This regulation is very difficult to handle in shepherding practice and causes an enormous bureaucratic effort, as each tree has to be counted on aerial photographs. VNP asks for a more practical regulation that takes the actual land use, i.e. the grazing of the whole area, into account. FFH Areas especially dry European heath with *Calluna vulgaris* (4030) and formations of *Juniperus communis* (5130) have to be retained by grazing.

For a good view in Lüneburger Heath search Wilsede in Google Earth. You can see imprints of landscape conservation and pictures of heath and threes and bushes.

4. Pursue the continuation of funding for the rearing of the „Heidschnucke“ (Heathland sheep) by Lower Saxony and the Federal Republic and recognise the „Dülmener Pferd“ (Heathland horses) as worthy of subsidy by the rear-premium of Lower Saxony

EU and the country of Lower Saxony support breeders of rare breeds of farm animals. In 2015 the breeding of “grey horned heathland sheep” (Graue gehörnte Heidschnucken), the traditional sheep breed of the Lüneburg Heath, is funded with 200 Euro per livestock unit.

“Dülmener Horse”, the only surviving German pony breed, is included in the 2016 list of rare and endangered breeds. Unfortunately the breeders of the rare breed of Dülmener horses are not yet supported by the European Union. A support of 350 Euro per livestock unit is needed.

5. Develop a concept for connecting the large heathlands areas east and west of Wilsede by an ecological corridor.

An ecological corridor linking the heath lands north and west of Wilsede (forest fringe north of “Heinköpen” Woodland) was not carried out until now. The corridors have to stay at the state of woodland or forest.

6. Pursue restoration of streams, their associated wetland biotopes and their buffer strips;

An ecological restoration scheme was carried out on various streams in the nature reserve throughout the past years. The stream of “Haverbeeke” will be restored for increasing the biodiversity of the stream and its banks. To initialize a dynamic river development, sections of Haverbeeke were improved with gravel banks and stream guidance.

A detailed plan to remove artificial ponds was drawn for “Haverbeeke” (a brook in the central part of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve). The measures have been done in winter 2015/2016. Financing was derived from a budget for the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive.

Further restoration schemes concerning “Brunau” and Tütsberg grassland are in preliminary planning.

7. Reduce areas with cultivation of energy-crops to a level that does not affect the nature reserve's flora, fauna, groundwater and the scenic attractions

**Energy crops like maize are still dominating and influencing the agricultural landscape in the neighbourhood of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve.**

**To increase the biodiversity on arable land used for energy crops VNP is planning many projects for agricultural ecological measures such as blossoming strips of wild flowers or nurse crops. The projects will be financed by European Union, Federal State of Lower Saxony and other ecological foundations. The impacts will be studied by the University of Lüneburg (Leuphana).**

8. Continue ecological forest management and convert mono-croppings of spruce into mixed forests including oak (*Quercus* spp.)

**VNP follows ecological forest management guidelines. The forests owned by VNP are certified by PEFC-Standards (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes). VNP promotes native tree species of so called "light woodlands" like oaks, pines and birches. Related to the PEPL of VNP for woodlands, forests are steady in process to become native tree species-forests instead of alien tree species-forests such as spruce or beech forests. For VNP it is self-evident to use forests in a sustainable way. Ecological, economic and social interests are basically considered in all forest related actions. For historic Forests it is necessary to use them in their old fashioned way to preserve their continuity.**

9. Ensure that existing data are included and respected in regional planning processes and also ensure that negative impacts on the nature reserve from outside the area's boundary are prevented; before licensing a wind farm, or any other project in the neighbourhood of the reserve, carry out sufficient and detailed studies taking into account the formulated VNP recommendations;

**There is still no instrument (data base) that bundles all up to date ecological information of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve in one place.**

**Existing ecological information is still not always included in planning processes. E.g.: The regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) gave planning permission for water lifting for irrigation in the neighbourhood of bog land without a Flora-Fauna-Habitat-impact study.**

10. Complete the database of Lower Saxony concerning FFH-Species so that all species existing in the reserve are listed and considered in regional, national and federal planning procedures;

**The standard information sheet (part of the FFH-directive planning process) was supplemented by known disturbances (but without questioning landowners).**

**Further species or habitats listed in the appendices of FFH-or EU-Bird-Directive were still not included in the standard information sheet.**

**The federal state of Lower Saxony does not carry out any further surveys of FFH- or EU-Bird directive species. There are still severe lacks of information concerning bats.**

**There are still no coherent ecological data bases in Lower Saxony. Data on species can be found in separate forest data bases, FFH-data bases, surface watercourse data bases and data bases concerning certain speciation like birds, reptiles, mammals, locusts, dragonflies, moths.**

**It is very laborious to extract relevant data from all this dispersed data bases to create a species list for a certain area.**

11. Create suitable ecological corridors between the nature reserve and the black grouse biotopes outside the reserve without endangering infrastructures such as like wind turbines;

**The district Heidekreis was planning a new corridor for connecting the nature reserve and the military training grounds to increase the habitat network of black grouse. No measures to improve or safeguard existing ecological corridors for black grouse were carried by the district of Heidekreis out during this period of report.**

**The regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) included a zone for wind energy east of Volkwardingen into the “Landschaftsrahmenplan” (regional landscape framework plan), situated in one of the corridors linking Lüneburger Heide nature reserve with important breeding habitats outside the reserve.**

**A small area (20 ha) of “Außenschießstellung Töpinger Heide” (a former military gun range) was cleared of shrubs. The surplus humus layer was removed mechanically, to create open, sandy soil for calluna-regeneration.**

**One flock of “Heidschnucken” is now grazing regularly in this area to keep the heath land open. “Außenschießstellung Töpinger Heide” is a so called “ecological stepp stone”, linking Lüneburger Heide nature reserve with the extensive military exercise grounds around Munster (important breeding habitats of black grouse).**

12. Realise the concept of buffer zone areas with a high protection status in the neighbouring areas of the nature reserve

**The expansion of the “Naturpark Lüneburger Heide” has been a good increase of a buffering zone to high protected areas of the nature reserve.**

13. Establish a corps of rangers (Naturwacht).

**VNP employs and finances four part time rangers. There is still no public funding for this ranger service, but new financing guidelines concerning large scale nature reserves is in progress (see recommendation No. 2). In other areas in Lower Saxony rangers have been employed but the large and highly frequented area of the nature reserve Lüneburger Heide has not been considered by now, where rangers are needed urgently.**

14. 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.**

The European wolf (*Canis lupus*) showed an enormous increase of packs and individuals during the last four years. A couple of wolves are seen regularly in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve. The wolves in the nature reserve were reproducing in 2016.

In 2016 VNP built several new and reinforced fences to protect its own flocks of sheep against wolves. The Country of Lower-Saxony set up a programme to fund so called “wolf-proof” fences. Until now no attacks of wolves on sheep flocks grazing in nature conservation schemes occurred.

A lot of people in and around the protecting area are concerned about wolves which were be seen near houses or domestic animals.

All rivers and brooks with in Lüneburger Heide nature reserve are now repopulated with the European otter (*Lutra lutra*). Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) are causing high damage to fishers.

The project “Pupils Farm” was started in September 2010 with grants from Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. Hamburg. Environmental education is provided by VNP through Schulbauernhof Hillmershof Wilsede and other projects with schools.

**15. 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

**16. Other information:**

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

**Volkwardingen Wind Park**





Photo: Simulation of wind turbines near “Totengrund”, the center of Lüneburger Heide nature reserve

VNP is very afraid about projected “Volkwardingen Wind Park”. This Wind Farm is situated only 1-2 km east of the reserve boundary.

The seven wind turbines (up to 185 m height of driving collar) would spoil the historic cultural landscape of Lüneburger Heide as the mills would be seen from all important view points within the reserve and from outside. Even the most popular view point “Totengrund” - which is also a place of high symbolic value for the history of nature conservation in Germany and the centre of the reserve - will be damaged (see photo above).

The proposed Wind Farm will also block an important migration corridor for Black grouse and Black stork linking EU Special protected areas (SPA) “Munster Nord / Süd” and “Lüneburger Heide nature reserve”. The area of Volkwardingen Wind Park is an important habitat for bats and particularly for Red kites (*Milvus milvus*) (listed in EU Bird directive 2009/147/EG of 30. November 2009 and on Red list IUCN 2006).

In the planned wind park area a lot of species especially birds with high value for environmental protection are disturbed in their breeding.

In 2014 the Higher Administrative Court of Lower Saxony (Oberverwaltungsgericht – OVG) pronounced a judgement concerning the regional planning documents’ zoning for wind turbines (Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm – RROP). The Court declared the planning document inaccurate and removed the zoning for Volkwardingen Wind Park. The area of proposed Volkwardingen Wind Park is now a so called “white area”, i.e. an area without zoning.

Nonetheless is the regional planning authority (Landkreis Heidekreis) still working on a zone for wind energy in Volkwardingen.

**VNP expects the assistance of the Council of Europe and its representatives to avoid the aesthetic devastation of one of the oldest “European Diploma Areas”. VNP asks the standing committee of the Bern Convention to apply to the European Union to protect one of the oldest European Diploma sites with all legal means.**

**VNP particularly demands a full assessment of environmental effects in accordance with 92/43/EWG Habitats Directive.**

## **19. GERMANY – SIEBENGEIRGE NATURE RESERVE**

**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. to draw up a management plan within three years in order to guarantee the preservation of the reserve and its cohesion within the larger area of the nature park.**

In June 2015 we presented the Management Plan for the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (4.850 ha) to the Council within the requested period after the Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas Awarded to the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (Germany) on July 6, 2011

This management Plan is embedded into the Large Scale Conservation Project “chance7 – Natur- und Kulturlandschaft zwischen Siebengebirge und Sieg”, a national programme (14.6 million € for a ten-year-period 2013-2023) designed to promote nationally important natural landscapes that provide outstanding habitats for protected animal and plant species. Meanwhile the three-year planning phase has been ended and implementation has started in different fields.

A relevant project was the building of 14 toad tunnels under a much frequented road to preserve the animals (with a peak of 7000 animals a year) from crossing the road on their way to the spawning grounds and back and being killed by cars. Nearly 2 km of ditches and feeder channels that the animals automatically fall into, were built and lead the toads to the tunnels. For more than 30 years honorary citizens had tried to carry them across the street and yet thousands were killed when creeping across the road, though temporarily the road was closed at night.

A second project is the restauration of former vineyards with dry stone walls on the climatically favoured Rhineland slopes of the Siebengebirge that had been lying fallow for many decades, and had completely been covered by bushes and woody plants. Thus the habitat of thermophile plants and animals had considerably shrunk. Meanwhile in labour intensive measures the brushwood has been removed, robust vineyard peach-trees have been planted, so that new living space has been created for special species related to such climatic areas.

A further measure that has just been initiated is the extension of heather-clad stretches on clayey soil in the eastern part of the Siebengebirge.

**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 or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

- 1. in case of changes in the management of the area, the leading role of the VVS (*Verschönerungsverein für das Siebengebirge*), whose work to date has been fully satisfactory in the eyes of the Council of Europe, should be maintained;**

Up to now the Verschönerungsverein für das Siebengebirge VVS has been manager of the Naturpark Siebengebirge (11.200 ha), the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (4.850 ha) is the central and most important part of.

So far, the Rhine-Sieg District and the City of Bonn have been the only communities of the Nature Park Siebengebirge area that contribute to the expenses of the park. Contributions also come from the North-Rhine-Westphalia Government, the Rhineland Regional Authority and, of course, from the VVS budget. Three communities of the Nature Park area, i.e. Bad Honnef, Königswinter and Sankt Augustin have profited from what the other partners paid for. That is why the VVS has for a long time been negotiating with all communities to secure a reliable and long term financial basis of Nature Park work.

Now, for 2017/18 we finally stand on the threshold of a solution, as all partners have agreed to contribute together ca. 200.000 € per year (personnel expenditure) for the management of the Nature Park. The communities have budgeted these amounts for the 2017/18 period. At present we are in final talks with the mayors, the Rhein-Sieg District Administrator and the North Rhine Westphalia Government what concerns details of the management.

A decisive role of the VVS has been guaranteed, because the VVS has saved the Siebengebirge from destruction (40 basalt quarries) in the 19th century, is the owner of the central area, looks after roads, hiking trails, 26 refuge huts, 186 benches, bridges, monuments etc., and has acquired experience in the Park's management for more than 30 years.,

- 2. develop a new financial plan together with local communities and the Rhein-Sieg-District;**  
cf. 2.1
- 3. continue the provision of financial support by the North Rhine Westphalia government;**

Considerable financial support has again been granted in 2016, including a prize of 79.000 € that the Nature Park has won in a government competition.

**4. maintain great vigilance regarding the possible construction of new roads;**

New roads have not been built nor are they planned.

**5. minimise disturbance caused by traffic on all roads crossing the Siebengebirge area and consider the setting up of a system of public transport for visitors;**

We must keep a watchful eye on private cars that (illegally) try to drive up to the Drachenfels. Strict controls and heavy fines have produced best effects.

**6. continue investigating the possibility of extending the wilderness area so as to guarantee the preservation of the natural beauty, features, resources and biodiversity of the Siebengebirge as a protected area;**

The NRW forest authorities meanwhile have added 207 ha of state forest to the VVS wildernis area; the NRW Foundation another 90 ha on the Petersberg, so that the total wildernis area in the Siebengebirge where “nature is left to itself” covers 820 ha.

**7. encourage the continuation and extension of scientific research**

A diploma thesis has been published by Dipl-Geol. Christoph Schwarz: Die Geschichte der geologischen Erforschung des Siebengebirges (190 S), Bonn, Nov. 2014

Prof. Dr. Heinz Schumacher has compiled a classified list of 431 species of diurnal butterflies and butterfly moths in the Siebengebirge

**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.

Cf. 2. Recommendation 1

**5. Other information**

1. Threats of a possible Factory Outlet Centre (FOC) in the city of Königswinter

For three years the Königswinter Municipal Council discussed the plan of establishing an FOC, not on a “green meadow” but in close proximity to the historical city centre. The FOC was supposed to attract nearly 2 million visitors a year who should contribute to revive the city.

After long negotiations with investors, political institutions in district and state, with German Federal Railways, after quite a lot of expert opinions and after strong opposition from neighbouring towns and environmental organizations this plan has been given up.

The VVS opposed this plan because of the FOC’s huge demand of parking space at the edge of the Reserve and because of the expected increase in road traffic crossing the Siebengebirge area.

2. Construction of a wind energy plant in the vicinity of the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve

The Siebengebirge Nature Reserve extends to the southern border of North-Rhine Westphalia and meets the neighbouring state of Rhineland-Palatinate. An RP community (Unkel) at a distance of about 10 km from the border has been discussing the construction of a wind energy plant. Originally there were plans to build 18 windwheels with a height of more than 120 m each. Broad protests of action committees, of environmental organizations, even of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation BfN, and expert opinions on the influence of such a

plant on natural surroundings, also the Siebengebirge and the Rhine valley, led to the result that a maximum of 5 windwheels were possible. This number was uneconomical for the investor and the plan was cancelled by the community of Unkel.

3. 480 new stone signposts, clear marking of hiking trails and 55 new signboards

In order to lead visitors through the Reserve und give them clear information, 450 stone plates with inscriptions were milled into stone blocks that so far had to be cleaned and marked by hand every two years.

Small red (pedestrians) and yellow (bikers) triangles painted on trees clearly regulate which trails are for hikers and which for bikers.

A third element for visitor information are 55 large-size signboards with information to the new concept and the network of hiking trails. A new hiking map has also been published.

This system so far only refers to the Nature Reserve. In 2017 we will make use of our prize (79.000 € cf. 2.3) and expand this system to the whole Nature Park, also to lead visitors to attractions outside the protected area, thus to relieve it.



## 20. GERMANY – WELTENBURGER ENGE NATURE RESERVE

### 1. Conditions:

The renewal of the European Diploma was not linked to any conditions.

### 2. Recommendations:

1. *Elaborate and implement maintenance measures for curbing the increasing growth of bushes on outcropping rocks, resulting in a reduction of the extent of xerotherm rock locations and the adapted species inhabiting them;*

The rock exposure concept prepared in 2006 has since been widely implemented. In 2016 mostly maintenance measures were carried out. These measures were predominantly carried out on the rocks on the right (southern) bank of the river Danube. Nevertheless, comparisons with old photographs also reveal significant tendencies of bush encroachment on the rocks and steep slopes on the left (northern) bank of the Danube. However, an exposure of rocks or removal of bushes is not in compliance with the status of a natural forest reserve. In order to maintain the very high-quality dry habitats in this area

measures are necessary. A coordination meeting is planned with the responsible forest administration regarding this issue.

2. ***Maintain strict control over ship and boat traffic, especially on the right bank of the Danube where, during the summer months when the water levels are low, numerous private boating tourists land on the exposed gravel banks;***

Inspections are carried out by the river police and rangers. Due to provisions of the regulations governing the use of nature reserves it is not possible to prevent landing on the gravel banks.

Speed measurements have been submitted by the shipping companies. These document violations of the maximum speed limit in some cases.

It was also found that barge tours do not always comply with the regulations set out (speed limit violations, permissible number of passengers on board and landing on non-approved sites).

3. ***Monitor the impact of ship and boat traffic on the water fauna;***

No investigations carried out during the period under report.

4. ***Promote the extensive use of the fields and meadows, especially by farmers and private owners;***

The meadows at the *Klösterl*, neglected grassland on the *Keltenwall* and xeric grassland near Würzburg are cultivated by mowing that is organised through the Landscape Conservation Association. Several meadows in the area are used extensively by farmers within the framework of the agricultural environment programmes.

5. ***Undertake regular audits of area-management effectiveness for biodiversity conservation and control of tourist uses within the nature reserve.***

The impact of exposing rocks and bush removal measures on the development of the vegetation and Mollusca is documented within the scope of a long-term monitoring project. In 2016 vegetation surveys were carried out. There is regular monitoring of bird life in the area. A specific monitoring of rock breeders (peregrine falcon, eagle owls and jackdaws) is carried out under the direction of the *Landesbund für Vogelschutz* (Bavarian organisation for the protection of birds). Eagle owl activities in the protected area and in bordering areas were also documented in 2016 by means of a field listening project involving numerous members of nature conservation associations and authorities. At the beginning of the year (main mating season of eagle owls) a meeting is regularly held with simultaneous listening sessions performed by a large number of nature observers.

The measures for channelling visitors are regularly checked for their effectiveness. Additional measures are required to supplement those that have already been implemented.

### **3. Area Management:**

Since October 2016 the Kelheim Forestry Management of the Bavarian State Forest Administration, that manages most of the forests in the area, has been under the direction of Ms Sabine Bichlmaier.

There have been no other changes to the area management.

### **4. Borders:**

In the assessment of the area carried out by Mr Brunner a question was raised concerning the actual area to which the awarded European Diploma applies. The European Diploma awarded in 1978 went to the nature reserve "Weltenburger Enge". With the renewal of the European Diploma in 1988 and in 1993 an expansion of the protected area was requested or recommended. This recommendation was implemented with the designation of the nature reserve "Hirschberg and Altmühlleiten" in 1995. Since then, the criteria for the European Diploma are considered as binding for both areas. Uniform regulations governing the use of both nature reserves are considered necessary by the responsible nature conservation authorities.

First talks on the harmonisation of regulations governing the use of nature reserves have already taken place.

It was established that incorrect protected area maps exist on the internet. This situation will be rectified without delay.

The town of Kelheim plans to request the removal of the plot of land on which the Waldfriedhof cemetery has been legally built.

#### **5. Further details:**

List here all further details concerning the European Diploma area that you wish to inform the Council of Europe about.

The shipping companies have requested that the suspension of shipping operations at a water level of 2.25 m or lower should no longer apply, and instead there should be a speed limit in critical areas as from a water level of 2.40 m and lower. A decision on this request has not yet been made in view of the European Diploma.

The Bayerische Rundfunk (Bavarian Broadcasting Company) plans to make a film about the area. Initial consultations have taken place.

#### **Note:**

In the assessment of the area awarded the European Diploma, carried out from 13 – 15 June 2016 by Council of Europe specialist Mr Robert Brunner, the status and the development of the area has been described in great detail. When preparing the Annual Report for 2016 it has therefore been assumed that items 6 ff. do not have to be addressed. Nevertheless, should it be required for us to do so, please inform us accordingly.

### **21. GERMANY – WOLLMATINGER RIED UNTERSEE-GNADENSEE NATURE RESERVE**

#### **1. CONDITIONS**

The last extension of the European Diploma for the Wollmatinger Ried was not linked to any conditions by the European Council.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6 recommendations were formulated in the last extension of the European Diploma until 28 November 2019 in the implementation of which the following progress could be achieved.

Here are our comments on the individual recommendations of the European Council:

#### **Recommendation 1 – Self-perpetuating development of the shallow-water zone:**

It is extremely important to allow the nature reserve to develop naturally, particularly in the shallow water sections. To this end, there should be no obstacles to the natural erosion and sedimentation processes.

##### **➤ Re. Recommendation 1:**

A snail sand-bank at the entry of the “Schläuche” reduces the water exchange in this shallow-water zone (lagoon) and the surrounding area. The question whether or not this sand-bank should be excavated which would cause an intervention into the self-perpetuating development of the shallow-water zone was postponed for the time of discussions at the Round Table for Professional Fishery in the Nature Reserve Areas on the Lake of Constance – Untersee (see recommendation 2).

#### **Recommendation 2: Tentative suspension of fishing in particularly sensitive core areas**

All fishing activity should be halted in the *Schläuche* and the Hegnebucht “lagoons” for an experimental

three-year period in order to further reduce the disturbances arising. An overall assessment of this measure should cover both the waterfowl and fish ecology.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

In the period under review, two meetings of the “Round Table for Professional Fishery in the Nature Reserves Areas on the Lake of Constance –Untersee” took place in which a study in a core zone of the nature reserve (Hegner Winkel) was made concrete. Such a study would include test periods with and without professional fishery activities. A complex multi-stage investigation programme (over 8 years) would be needed to get statistically robust results. No final decision could be made due to the expected high expenditures the amount of which cannot yet be fully estimated.

**Recommendation 3: Documentation of the moulting process and elimination of potential disturbances**

The Wollmatinger Ried is a refuge area for avifauna sensitive to disturbances, particularly during the moulting season. Increasing numbers of ferruginous ducks (*Aythya nyroca*), a threatened species, are coming to the area north of the Reichenau “dyke road” for the moulting season. Only few studies of this have been conducted so far, therefore these should be documented and all potential disturbances should be eliminated (fishing, water sports, etc.).

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

As in the previous years, the significance of the nature reserve as an over-summering and moulting location for waterfowl was again documented within the scope of the extended waterfowl monitoring programme. Disturbances caused by leisure activities in the Ermatingen basin were mostly limited to the periphery. These could be countered vigorously and at an early stage by volunteers at the conservation and observation station “Netta” and the waterway police. In contrast, disturbances by kite-surfers took effect far into the protected Hegnau Bay. Since these events appeared mostly in winter time they were mostly detected too late so that it was difficult to react systematically. Disturbance from the air mainly caused by hot-air balloons was a considerable nuisance. Apart from its documentation, no direct actions against it can be taken from the ground. The pilots of the Zeppelin NT mostly respected the voluntary agreements also in this season. Disturbance caused by police and border patrol helicopters were limited to some few individual cases.

**Recommendation 4: Harmonisation of the cooperation between Switzerland and Germany**

Throughout the protected area, but especially in the Ermatinger Becken area, an effort is needed to harmonise protection measures by developing co-operation between Germany and Switzerland, for example, as part of the international conference of Lake Constance.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4:**

In the framework of the Round Table acting since December 2014 (see recommendation 2) there is an exchange with official authorities in Switzerland which was continued also in the year under review. One of the objectives of the meetings is the further harmonisation of the cross-border cooperation.

**Recommendation 5: Road-constructions must not disturb the nature reserve – compensatory measures must be given priority**

The scheduled road works to improve traffic flow at the entrance of the reserve – B33 and western bypass (Tangente West) – are part of a comprehensive landscape concept and must not disturb the reserve. The compensatory measures necessitated by the work must be implemented as a matter of priority.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 5:**

The most intensive building activities for the extension of the B 33 took again place in the area of the Kindlebild junction and the ramp of the bridge over the railway line. In spite of protection measures,

building rubble was stored even in the reserve but has been largely removed meanwhile. In anticipation of the next construction section, the building of a new ecological connection corridor for the reserve between Hegne and Reichenau-Waldsiedlung has been started.

The Higher Nature Protection Authority carried out in 2016 the amendment procedure for the extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares provided as compensatory measure. The amended regulation will become legally valid in 2016. With the exception of the building of flooding skips and a noise protection wall, the structural measures in the extension area are now completed.

#### **Recommendation 6: Future of the Nature Reserve Centre Wollmatinger Ried**

The continued operation of the reception centre in the premises of the former Reichenau railway station is not guaranteed for the medium and long term. This question should be settled as soon as possible.

##### **➤ Re. Recommendation 6:**

The building application for the new building of the NABU nature Conservation Centre has been completed. The necessary means of 2.5 million € are ensured proportionally by own resources of NABU and a grant given by the state of Baden-Württemberg. The start of construction is expected for 2017.

### **3. SITE MANAGEMENT**

The Ministry of Environment, Climate and Energy of Baden-Württemberg has superseded as central authority the Ministry of Rural Areas and Consumer Protection that had been responsible in the past.

### **4. BOUNDARIES**

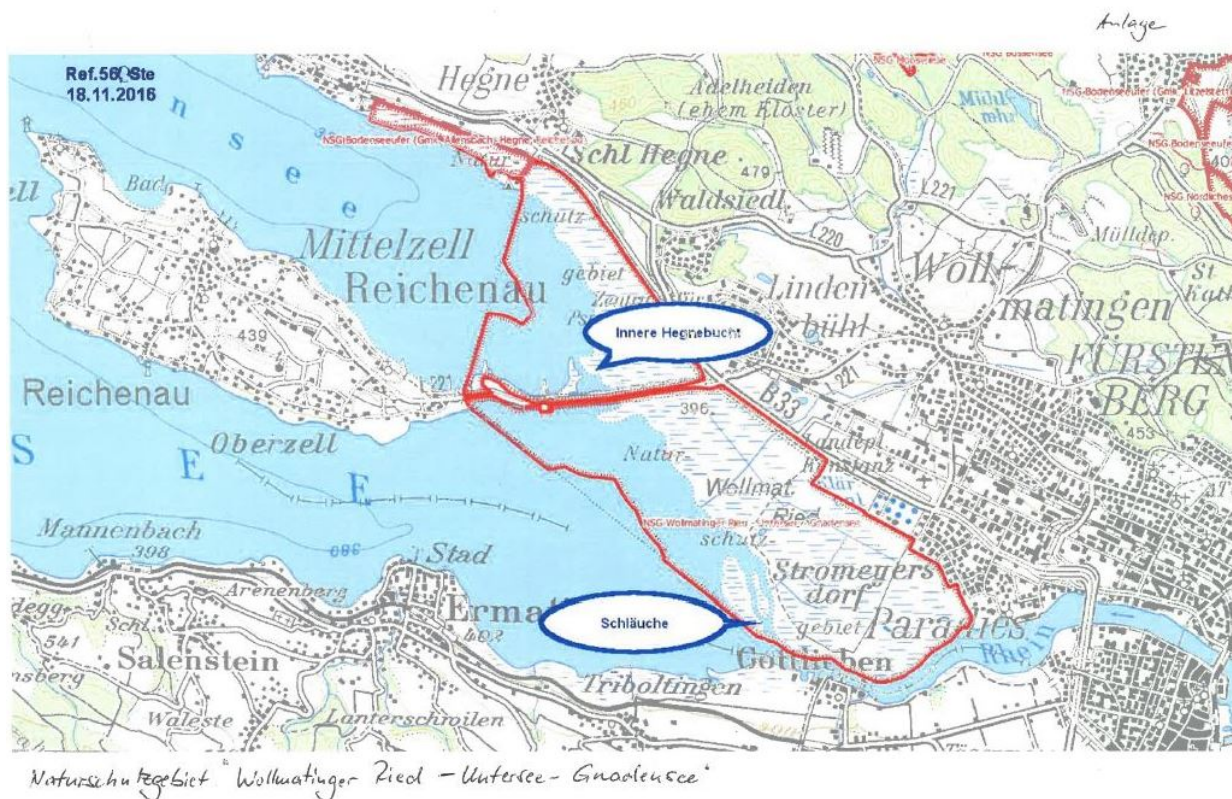
The proceedings for the extension of the nature reserve by 7 hectares on the West of the sewage plant of Constance were carried out in 2016 by the Higher Nature Conservation Authority. The amended regulation will come into effect in 2016.

There are no changes in comparison to the reporting year 2015 concerning the extension of the EU bird sanctuary on the water side provided in the management plan as development measure of the reserve.

### **5. OTHER INFORMATION**

In spite of its high publicity, the general esteem and the particular protection thanks to the European Diploma, the Wollmatinger Ried is still under pressure caused by a great number of small measures: roads and industrial buildings in the direct vicinity are getting denser and move directly to the border of the nature reserve. Competing uses (water sports, aviation) still continue to cause problems in the core areas of the nature reserve. All these individual cases together cause a continuous and time-consuming dispute by the nature protection authorities.





## 22. GERMANY - WURZACHER RIED NATURE RESERVE

### 1. Conditions for extension of the European Diploma

No conditions have been imposed.

### 2. Recommendations for extension of the European Diploma

#### Recommendation 1:

The Peat Museum on the edge of the nature reserve will represent a new attraction. It aims at providing information about issues of nature conservation, and install suitable facilities, in particular a small tower affording panoramic views. The funding for this should preferably be raised on the basis of a co-partnership arrangement.

#### ➤ Re. Recommendation 1:

*The Peat Museum with the Peat Railway and Peat Educational Trail has evolved into an attraction and an important and well-attended building block of the educational work carried out in the Wurzach Ried, with annual visitor numbers reaching again around 15,000 in the year under review. It is run on a voluntary basis by the local culture and heritage preservation society "Wurzen" with the support of the city of Bad Wurzach and the Wurzach Ried Nature Reserve.*

*For the planned construction of a viewing tower in connection with guided tours of visitors in the Haidgau peat works, the city of Bad Wurzach has ordered that investigations of the foundation in the peat bed are carried out. The Nature Conservation Centre is examining whether such a project can be carried out with the help of the LEADER promotion program "Württembergisches Allgäu".*

#### Recommendation 2:

The scale of projects performed by a small permanent staff team is considerable. The special endeavours undertaken to provide guided tours and to host school classes deserve to be supported. In consultation with the school authorities, ways and means must be found to maintain this support.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

*In the Nature Conservation Centre Wurzacher Ried, just under 300 events and projects are executed every year, which are attended by around 22,000 visitors. Around 80 projects in particular are aimed at children, youngsters and school classes within the framework of the nature study curriculum, and these are attended by around 1,500 participants.*

*Contact has been made with the responsible school administration with a view to arranging for an increase in staffing for the Nature Conservation Centre team, and intensive talks aimed at improving the cooperation with the school administration authorities are held. Some initial training seminars for teachers and a conference as to the topic “sustainable school” took place. A study group with the target to improve the cooperation between schools and extra-curricular learning sites has been established.*

**Recommendation 3:**

The road section of the B465 which cuts through the reed is no longer a major problem due to the measures undertaken. In the medium or long term, as a result of the demolition of the road, road traffic should give way entirely to pedestrian and cycling traffic.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

*The recommendations of the European Council concerning the B 465 have been successfully implemented meanwhile. In addition, the road section crossing the reed has been given rank number 5 in the list of the most important cross-linking sections in the “state-wide concept of re-linking of roads in Baden-Württemberg” of the Ministry for Transport of Baden-Württemberg”. The RegierungspräsidiumTübingen – department 44 [road planning] in technical co-ordination with department 50 [nature conservation and landscape planning] has currently commissioned a feasibility study for further-reaching nature-conserving improvement and re-linking.*

**Recommendation 4:**

The areas planted with maize on the slopes around the moor are to be restricted, for instance by the purchase of land. This would have a positive impact on the water quality.

**Recommendation 5:**

The main endeavours to purchase land in the surrounding areas are to be continued. The problem of the Albers hillsides, in which five hectares of purchased land still continue to be intensively farmed, must be tackled.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4 und 5:**

*The acquisition of land will be continued as the financial circumstances of the State of Baden-Württemberg and the existing offers from private land owners allow. Intensive efforts are currently being made to possibly acquire of the hillside areas around Albers which could, however, not yet been implemented successfully due to the lack of suitable barter areas.*

**Recommendation 6:**

The marked increase in the number of high-voltage conductors in the surrounding area is damaging the countryside. Applications for underground laying must continue to be submitted, even if this involves high costs.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 6:**

*In respect of the demolition or underground laying of high-voltage conductors in the Wurzacher Ried nature reserve, contact has been made with the responsible utility company. However, to date no suitable measures have been achieved.*

### **3. Site management**

In spring 2016, additional permanent information sign boards for the permanent exhibition “Moor extrem” were installed near the main access roads leading the city of Bad Wurzach.

#### **Maintenance and development work**

In the renaturation areas, the vegetation development initiated in line with the stipulations of the maintenance and development plan progressed further. In various reed moor areas gratifying regeneration tendencies are in evidence with increased peat moss growth. Overall, the waterlogging areas are developing as hoped. The irrigation measures have permitted the undergrowth proliferation and forestation of the moor to be significantly reduced. The damming activity of the beavers (castor fiber) in residence since the year 2000 is supporting this development.

The beaver population remains stable with 7 - 10 families. However, in the past year under review a part of the dammed-in peat work channel and of the surrounding waterlogged area has largely fallen dry due to the beavers digging activities. This impaired the moor regeneration areas as well as the beavers themselves so that counter-measures had to be taken. An engineering office has currently be mandated with the sustainable restoration of the hydrologic balance. The necessary measures will presumably be terminated in the year 2018.

The first breed of the crane (*Grus grus*) since many decades in Upper Swabia that was recorded in the year under review emphasizes the positive development of the biotope structures in the waterlogging areas.

The maintenance and development work carried out in cooperation with local farmers within the maintenance and extensivation zone has been continued as in past years in accordance with the maintenance and development plan (appr. 300 hectares; 35 farmers).

In the year under review, the Regierungspräsidium Tübingen began the necessary surveys and mapping work for the preparation of a new “Natura2000 management plan”. The detection of birds for the management plan related to the bird sanctuary “Wurzacher Ried” (reserve number 8025-401) is finalized and presently evaluated. The surveys for the FFH-relevant animal and plant species were also completed in the reporting year. The survey of the FFH habitat types is provided for the year 2017. The management plan is expected to be finalized in 2018.

A research project on the topic of “problems with wild boars in the environment of reserves” was carried out in the year under review in the Wurzach reserve by the Agricultural Centre of Baden-Württemberg, department “wildlife research”. The same institution, department “grassland farming”, prepared a long-term test area in some selected maintained areas in the Wurzach reed to explore the spreading and containment of marsh ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) which is extremely toxic in livestock feed.

#### **Monitoring**

In the year under review, the monitoring was suspended. It is planned to invite new tenders for the monitoring in the coming year and to carry it on according to the maintenance and develop plan.

#### **Moor protection approach of the state of Baden-Württemberg**

The State government of Baden-Württemberg prepared in the last year under review a state-wide moor protection concept. The target is the middle and long-term renaturation of all regenerable moors and the adjustment of land use to low moor soils in the sense of climate protection and the maintenance of biological diversity. The Wurzach Reed has been chosen as one of six pilot sites in this state. In this

context, a first research order has been commissioned to a specialised planning office to further optimise the renaturation measures.

### **Bad Wurzach Nature Conservation Centre**

The most important informative facility for visitors is the Bad Wurzach Nature Conservation Centre. In the year under review, the centre carried out about 300 environmental education events and was visited by around 20,000 guests. The new permanent exhibition “MOOR EXTREM” opened in 2013 at a financial cost of around 800,000 Euro in the new annex of the monastery building Maria Rosengarten is enjoying ever-growing popularity.

The final relocation together with the administrative wing of the Nature Conservation Centre into the renovated historic monastery building Maria Rosengarten will presumably take place in spring 2017.

#### **4. Site boundaries**

There were no changes in the period under review

#### **5. Further information**

##### **Wind power plants**

Within the framework of endeavours to encourage regenerative forms of energy creation, to date it has been possible to eliminate the Wurzbacher Basin as a possible location for the installation of wind power plants, partially also on the basis of recommendations to this effect by the European Council.

##### **Public relations in connection with the European Diploma**

The request of the European Council that in public relations the importance of the European Diploma be emphasized with a logo informing on the European Diploma areas has been fulfilled in the Wurzach Reed.

The logo is meanwhile integrated in the program and the website of the Nature Conservation Center (see [www.wurzacher-ried.de](http://www.wurzacher-ried.de)), the information flyer Wurzacher Ried and the sign-boards of the protected area. A special station has been devoted to the European Diploma in the permanent exhibition of the information centre Wurzacher Ried (see enclosed photo documents).

In future new publications and/or reprints of existing publications or newly established infrastructures, the European Diploma together with the logo will also appear as far as possible.

### **23. GREECE – CRETAN WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK (SAMARIA)**

**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.

<b>Not applicable.</b>
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**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.

<b>1. The relevant authorities should accelerate actions to extend the boundaries of the national park to cover a much larger area of the Cretan White Mountains;</b>
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The Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori was completed in 2009 and was sent to the Ministry of Environment and Energy for examination and approval. The Specific Environmental Study proposes extensive boundaries and zoning of the National Park, in relation to the current boundaries. The approval
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of the Specific Environmental Study due to bureaucracy reasons was delayed and then in 2011 a new environmental law was put into force, Law No. 3937/2011 “Biodiversity Conservation and other provisions”.

This meant that the Presidential Decree Draft which was included in the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori should be revised in order to incorporate the new law in its context. After a period of conflicting decisions it was finally decided that the revision should be done by the staff of the Management Body. This procedure concluded in December 2014 and the revised presidential decree draft is currently examined by the Ministry’s services as to be sent for approval and signature from the President of the Hellenic Republic.

**2. An expert on biodiversity should be appointed or contracted to carry out regular monitoring of the flora and fauna of the park;**

The flora, natural habitats and fauna of the National Park were completely recorded during a project for recording and observing (monitoring) which was finished in late 2015. The data were gathered and categorized in a database and were sent to the Ministry of Environment and Energy for a six-year monitoring of the whole NATURA area, in which the National Park is included. These data comprise the first complete database (descriptive and distributive) for the species and natural habitats of the National Park. The actions of registry and observance are continued today after the ending of the monitoring project, by the personnel of the Management Body, which were trained to continue it.

**3. An annual budget should be allocated to the park, to be administered by the management board. The income from the entrance fee to the park may also be considered to finance monitoring projects, particularly recommendation 2 above.**

Both Samaria National Park Management Body and the Forest Directorate of Chania have officially and repeatedly claimed a portion of the income from the entrance fee to the Park from the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The law of establishment of the Management Bodies of Protected Areas in Greece makes provisions for the receiving of income from entrance fees in the protected areas. However, given the uncertainty regarding the future of Management Bodies in Greece and because of the memorandum obligations of the Country the third recommendation has not yet been fulfilled (concerning the incomes).

**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.

**Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna**

- The implementation of restriction measures against the insertion of domestic goats to the Samaria Gorge has continued. In this way, natural selection and succession were allowed to continue their course without any interference. The effort for the elimination of illegal hunting is an ongoing procedure.

- The project “In situ and ex situ conservation of *Zelkova abelicea* in Crete 2014 - 2016” continued and concluded in 2016. This project is funded by the University of Fribourg, coordinated in Crete by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH) and conducted in collaboration with the Forest Directorate of Chania (and other Forest Directorates of Crete), the University of Fribourg, the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the National Research Council (CNR) of Italy and the University of Athens.

The project aims at the protection of the endemic tree species *Zelkova abelicea* that is threatened according to IUCN.

In situ conservation actions include:

- The selection of pilot plots for fencing
- The fencing of selected individuals
- Monitoring of the growth of the enclosed individuals
- The selection of pilot plots in other areas, fencing and monitoring of the growth also there.

So far, fourteen (14) plots have been fenced and are monitored in Lefka Ori natural populations of *Zelkova abelicea* (of a total area equal to ~730m<sup>2</sup>), 4 others in Kedros Mountain (Rethymnon) and 6 more in South Dikti (Heraklion)..

The ex-situ conservation actions include:

- Collection of seeds for seedbanking and ex situ cultivation
- Storage of the seeds at the seed bank of MAICH
- Collection of *Zelkova abelicea* cuttings for vegetative propagation and cultivation
- Selection and preparation of a field of the Municipality of Platanias at Omalos plateau for an ex situ plantation and cultivation of *Zelkova abelicea*.
- Planting in the ex situ field.

In 2014, only one seedlot was collected from Omalos population due to the fact that the seed production of last year was almost null. Germination experiments were conducted by MAICH and the seedlings produced are cultivated in the nurseries of MAICH and the Forest Directorate of Chania. Some of these are going to be transplanted in the ex situ cultivation at the field of the Platanias Municipality. In 2015, three seedlots were collected from natural populations of Lefka Ori (Omalos, Therisso, Imbros) and are under curation (cleaning, drying, etc.); however, the percentage of sound viable seeds is expected to be again quite low, based on preliminary examinations.

Meetings of the project scientific committee are organized at a yearly basis at Chania.

The program also includes actions of public awareness with the dissemination of the project's objectives, actions and results (at local and international level). Considering the satisfactory results and the constructive cooperation, the University of Fribourg has already shown interest in a three-year extension of the project, which finds all partners in agreement (the M.A.I.Ch. Institute and the Forestry Services of Crete).

- The "Pilot Project for the long-term monitoring of native aromatic and medicinal plants in the Prefecture of Chania and evaluation of their natural populations" which is financed by the Green Fund and is conducted by the Forest Directorate of Chania, the MAICH Institute and the Biology Department of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens, continued successfully in 2016. Significant conclusions have been drawn both for the proper use and the determination of the institutional framework as well as the certification of the amplification material and origin safety and processing of the aromatic and pharmaceutical herbs. More specifically, during 2016 more than 30 field trips were made, which combined with the field trips of 2015 have resulted in the almost complete in situ evaluation and mapping of the four aromatic herb populations under investigation (Sideritis, Sage, Oregano, Cretan Marjoram). In parallel, ten permanent pilot plots for monitoring have been set and signed, which will be visited at specific and frequent time frames for recording population data which will allow the drawing of trustworthy conclusions regarding the population progress of the aforementioned plant species.

- Cooperation with the UNESCO organization for the renewal of the MAB Certificate. Participation in conferences and cooperation with Public Bodies for the renewal of the MAB Certificate.

- The Management Body continues the action of light trap placing and data record (population, situation of populations) for *Capra aegagrus* inside the Samaria National Park. The data are both valuable for the study of the species ecology and against illegal hunting cases, due to the direct observation of the area.

**•Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)**

- Following a formal request from the central services, an Act of Council of Ministers (33/2006 (article.2 par.1) decision ΔΠΠΑΑΔ/Φ.ΕΓΚΡ. 44/3149/30-3-2016, ΔΠΠΑΑΔ/Φ.ΕΓΚΡ. 64/10322/04-05-2016) was signed that made provisions for the employment of 26 people as seasonal staff for the needs of the National Park of Samaria.

The seasonal personnel employed this year by the Forest Directorate of Chania, included two Foresters, two forest technicians, one Biologist, two Forest Protection Specialists, one computer operator, one administrative personnel, four rangers, five workers and two drivers who were employed for the period between June 2016-December 2016.

On the other hand, the permanent staff of the Forest Directorate of Chania performs the task of managing and protection of the National Park, including other obligations. The permanent staff is comprised from four people as an advisory staff, twenty five rangers, two drivers, one worker, two Foresters and one forest technician.

- The Fire Department employed 9 firemen this year, in the wider area of Lefka Ori.

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

- This year, as every year before the opening of the gorge to the public, the central path was cleaned and repaired from the various damages which had occurred during the winter and it was paved with stone where necessary. This task was undertaken by the Forest Directorate of Chania. Also the seasonal staff was responsible for the continuous maintenance along the central path as well as the emergency paths which led to gathering areas. The severity of last winter caused significant damages along the largest part of the route and destroyed infrastructure (resting points, protection wire mesh, etc.). For this reason, before the opening of the Park, the project "Repair of damages to the central path of the National Park of Samaria" was concluded with a budget of 60.000 €

**•Field equipment (hides and study facilities)**

- The Forest Directorate of Chania was supplied with one modern stretcher and organized the First-Aid system along the central path.

- The Forest Directorate of Chania ensured that the rangers and the seasonal staff were supplied with the necessary clothing for uniformity and recognizing reasons.

- The Forest Directorate of Chania directed maintenance and ware work for the fire protection system and its harmonization with the natural environment.

**•Improvement of infrastructure**

- Maintenance works were conducted at the water tank at 'Potistiria' and after the approval of the 'Corrosion restoration in the sites 'Kefalovrisia' and Samaria of the National Park of Lefka Ori' project, work for the arrangement of the river bed at the site 'Kefalovrisia' was carried out. Furthermore, in the Samaria outpost, the bridge foundations were reinforced with special gabions due to damage caused by time and the river flow force. Additionally, some buildings were insulated.

- The project 'Embellishment of the northern entrance and facility maintenance of the National Park facilities aiming to the aesthetic improvement of the current infrastructures of the Samaria National Park, and the connection of the existing Information Center with the outpost of the Forest Directorate of Chania in the entrance of the National Park' was announced and approved. Implementation of the project will start when legal issues of law 4413/2016 are resolved.



- Maintenance work of the National Park Museum was also conducted.
- A technical report for the maintenance of wooden structures (railings, benches, tables etc.) and creation of new ones was drafted. Also, the already existing infrastructures (outposts, Information Center, southern exit at 'Agia Roumeli', toilets etc.) were also maintained.
- With the aid of the Archeological Service the churches and other findings of the gorge were recorded and evaluated.
- A chemical and microbiological investigation for the water used by the visitors and rangers of the gorge was also conducted at all springs.

**•Administrative department: changes made**

The Forest Directorate of Chania was responsible for the management of the Samaria National Park for the year 2016. The total number of visitors was 147.643 individuals, of which 133.646 entered from the northern entrance in 'Xyloskalo', whereas 13.997 entered from 'Agia Roumeli' (southern entrance). The total income was 663.875€ and were deposited to the Green Fund.

Visitor numbers increased at the 'Petra' Museum of 'Agia Roumeli' which operated in a more organized way than previous years. At the Information Center at 'Xyloskalo' organized groups were visiting the gorge for the best part of the year.

Visits of mountaineering clubs were also frequent with the organization of the "Samaria Run 2016" as the top event.

An increased interest was also shown by national and foreign bodies for actions of public projection of the gorge.

**•Wardens' department: changes made**

- In 2016, the seasonal personnel of the Forest Directorate of Chania involved in the management of the National Park were trained in first aid. The seasonal personnel employed in 2016 by the Forest Directorate of Chania, included four rangers for the period of June 2016-December 2016. The guard of the gorge is continued by the permanent personnel with patrols during the whole duration of the day.

Work for the maintenance and water insulation of buildings and outposts of the National Park were also carried out, aiming to the improvement of the working environment of the personnel.

**•Internal policing measures**

In the frame of connecting the Samaria National Park with the society of Chania, the Forest Directorate of Chania actively contributed to the organization of events such as:

1. The event of the Communist Party of Greece in memoriam of the victims of civil war in Samaria.
2. The annual festival in Samaria.
3. Event with guides and conversation and account of their contribution, as well as honorable award to the oldest guide of the National Park.

**•Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action**

Individual attempts of visitors trying to violate the operation regulations of the National Park concerning the opening hours were handled successfully.

**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 in the boundaries of the protected area were made since the last annual report. As it was already mentioned in section 3, the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori, that proposes extensive boundaries and zoning of the National Park, in relation to the current boundaries, was completed in 2009.

However, the procedure of the declaration of the new National Park is in the final stage.

**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.

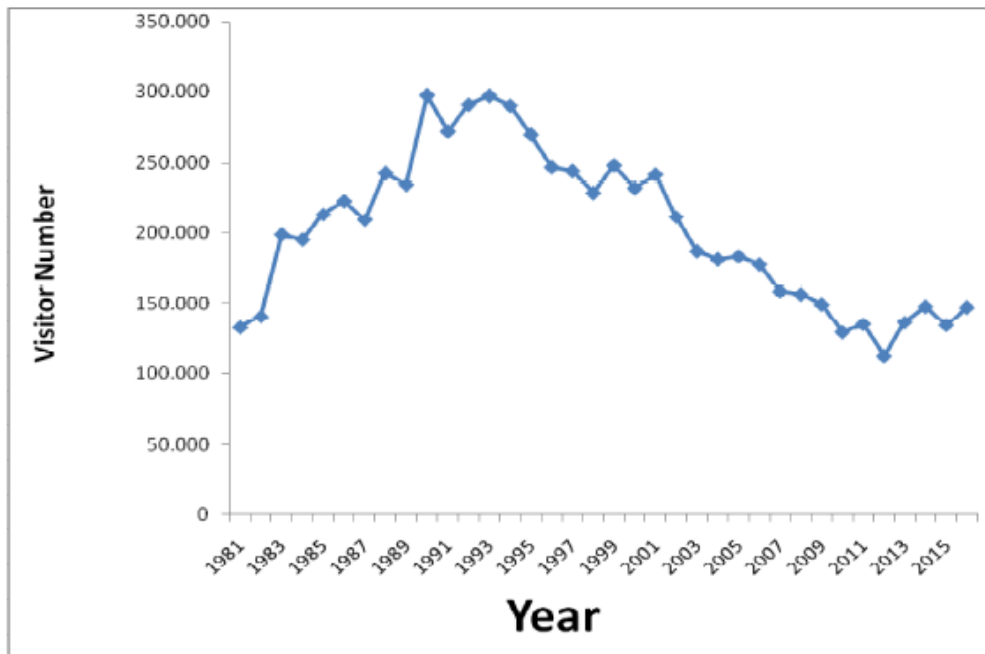
The logo of the European Diploma was placed on the information sign at the entrance to the National Park and on all the signs along the central path.

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### 6. Statistical analysis

#### 3.1.2 Visitor frequency and attitude (number, time and place distribution)

In 2016 the total number of visitors was 147.643, increased by 8.9% comparing to the last year. The increase is mainly attributed to the favorable weather conditions during September and October, resulting in the National Park being open. Graph 1 depicts the total number of visitors per year. The average visitor number from 1981 to 2016 is 202.933.



**Graph 1.** Visitor number per year.

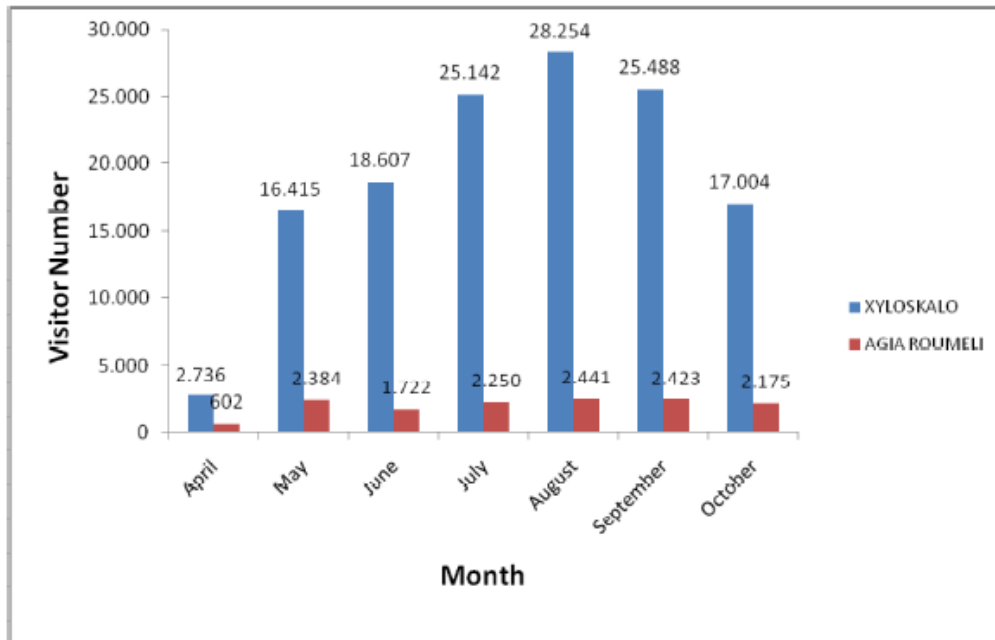
Graphs 2 depicts the monthly distribution of visitors for 2016. The highest percentage scores are during July (19%) and August (21%) where the tourist peak is observed in Crete, as well as September (19%) during which the weather conditions were very favorable. During October a significant decrease was observed (13%), the main factor being the end of the tourist period in Crete and as a consequence the number of foreign visitors dropped drastically. In comparison with last year a significant visitor increase is reported during September (35,48% increase compared to last September), with good weather conditions being the main factor of the increase. For the same reason an increase during October was observed compared to last October; frequent rain events led to the closing of the National Park earlier than expected.



**Graph 2.** Monthly visitor distribution.

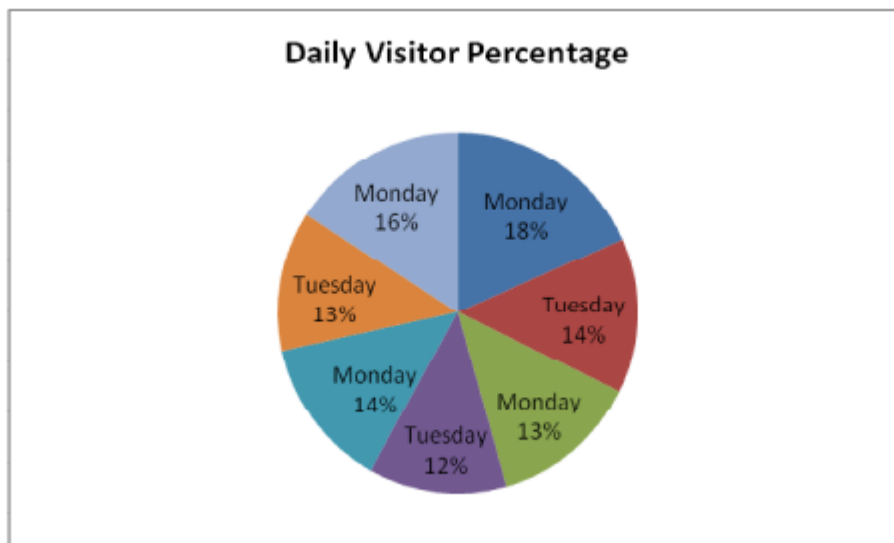
Most visitors clearly prefer the northern entrance (Xyloskalo) compared with the southern (Agia Roumeli) because of the great difficulty in ascending from south to north.

The gorge was open to the public for 192 days from ‘Xyloskalo’ and 195 days from ‘Agia Roumeli’. The visitor number entering from ‘Xyloskalo’ was 133.646, whereas from ‘Agia Roumeli’ was 13.997, fact that shows that the daily average was 696 individuals for the former case and 72 for the latter. Interpretation of the distribution over the number of visitors per entrance site and per month (Graph 3) shows that the peak of visitors for the northern entrance (Xyloskalo) was during July, August and September, whereas visitors from ‘Agia Roumeli’ showed a more stable monthly distribution until the 30th of October when the gorge was open. From October 31st and on the gorge was closed.



**Graph 3.** Monthly distribution of visitors per entrance.

The National Park was open for 195 days and the daily visitor average was 757 individuals, showing a slight but significant increase (8.9%) when compared with the previous year. The highest scores were observed during Sundays and Mondays. On the other hand, during the rest of the days, the visitor numbers were slightly lower but at a constant level between them (Graph 4).



**Graph 4.** Daily visitor percentage.

## 24. HUNGARY - IPOLYTARNÓC PROTECTED AREA

### 1. Conditions:

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)15 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Ipolytarnóc Protected Area (Hungary) (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 at the 1091st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) renewed the Diploma to Ipolytarnoc Fossils until 11 September 2020. During the renewal no special conditions were specified.

### 2. Recommendations:

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)15 attached the following 5 recommendations to the renewal:

I.. Recognising the site's high potential for further discoveries of geological interest, research – especially the palaeontological excavations – should continue; all appropriate measures should be taken to preserve and, if possible, exhibit the natural resources; the results of scientific research should be made publicly available;

*Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:*

*Research on the fossil footprints on the geological study trail got expanded, 6-8 new taxons were identified. Lectures were given and research papers were uploaded to the homepage of the site and were published in book format. Due to the discovered wetland paleoenvironment new animations were created and are in use in the high-tech interpretation.*

II. The site should take an active role in the management of the Slovak-Hungarian transborder Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark, in order to preserve and interpret the natural assets of the region and to become a focal, multilingual information point for geotourism;

*Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:*

*The trans-boundary Novohrad-Nograd Geopark with the essential endorsement of the BNPD, became member of the European and Global Geoparks Networks in 2010 and its membership got extended for further 4 years in 2014. Luckily, due to the last year's changes within the Geopark leadership, ties with the BNPD got closer and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two parties this year. The BNPD could delegate one member (the leader of Ipolytarnoc) to the EGN Coordination Committee.*

*The Global Geoparks were recognized by the UNESCO in November 2015, and as a follow up the Government established the Hungarian Geopark Committee to endorse the initiative, the BNPD takes part in the Committee's work.*

*As the main gateway to the geopark, Ipolytarnoc promotes the geological heritage preservation of the region and advocates its resources to the visitors during special events, like the usual Geopark Week at the turn of May.*

III. The entrance to the protected area should have an appropriate gateway displaying information in order to control tourism within the site and the buffer zone; the buildings along the geological trail should be further integrated into the landscape; the power line that runs between the village and the visitor centre should be replaced with an underground cable;

*Action taken by the site to comply with the new recommendation:*

*There are information panels emplaced in front of the entrance gate, QR code and old Hungarian script alphabet are used beside Hungarian, Slovak and English languages.*

*Because of fire-protection restrictions vegetation cover of the prediploma buildings is limited. Nevertheless, there are project plans targeting EU funds, to modernize the visitor information system and erect landscape integrated and enlarged buildings in place of the old, industrial structures.*

*Although there is no new development with the power line's replacement, yet a project plan focuses on underground cable laying. The BNPD intends to apply for funds to achieve this till 2020.*

IV. The gradual replacement of the exotic trees with indigenous species should be continued by assisting the natural succession process through ecologically sensitive land management practices; the control of game – causing considerable damage to vegetation and protected animal species – should be continued;

*Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:*

*A larger scale forestry activity goes on covering some 10 hectares, where the former acacia forest section's transformation by indigenous tree samplings is going well, although fencing had to be introduced to prevent game over-browsing. Game management is an ongoing activity throughout the year, since the whole area is a specially designated hunting area managed by the BNPD.*

V. The balance between open spaces and wooded areas on the western side of the conservation area, close to the nearby settlement, should be maintained to preserve the mosaic structure of the landscapes there;

*Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:*

*Effective animal husbandry, sheep grazing and hay cutting activities manage the mosaic-like structure of open spaces with forested areas at the buffer zone of the Fossils, the meadows are leased to local farmers there. In the border zone tree thinning on forest edges also maintains the mixed vegetation cover of the landscape.*

### **3.Site Management:**

The BNPD provides leadership and special management work for the site from the Headquarters. A new maintenance position was filled last fall (another personnel is expected till the end of this year), up till now it has 4 in situ permanent staff members (including 2 rangers) running the site all around the year. The personnel enlargement is a welcome development, yet still more staff would be needed to ensure effective long-term management.

The Fossils provided a year-long seasonal work opportunity for the locally unemployed. 27 people of the nearby 4 settlements were involved this year. The Visitor Centre is mid-term leased to a company, which runs the local buffet as well. The working relationship with them is satisfactory and effective.

**4. Boundaries:**

No boundary changes concerned the site, its buffer and core zones are well defined.

**5. Other information:**

VIP visitors are frequent at the site, the importance of the European Diploma is well recognized. The media attention focused on the fossil footprint discoveries. Within the Hungarian Post Office Philatelic Catalog a new block (with the title *geological treasures*) was published, one stamp of that depicts a fossil plant remain of Ipolytarnoc.



*Daphnogene fossil plant impression from Ipolytarnoc*

**25. HUNGARY - SZÉNÁS HILLS PROTECTED AREA**

**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.

- no conditions

**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.

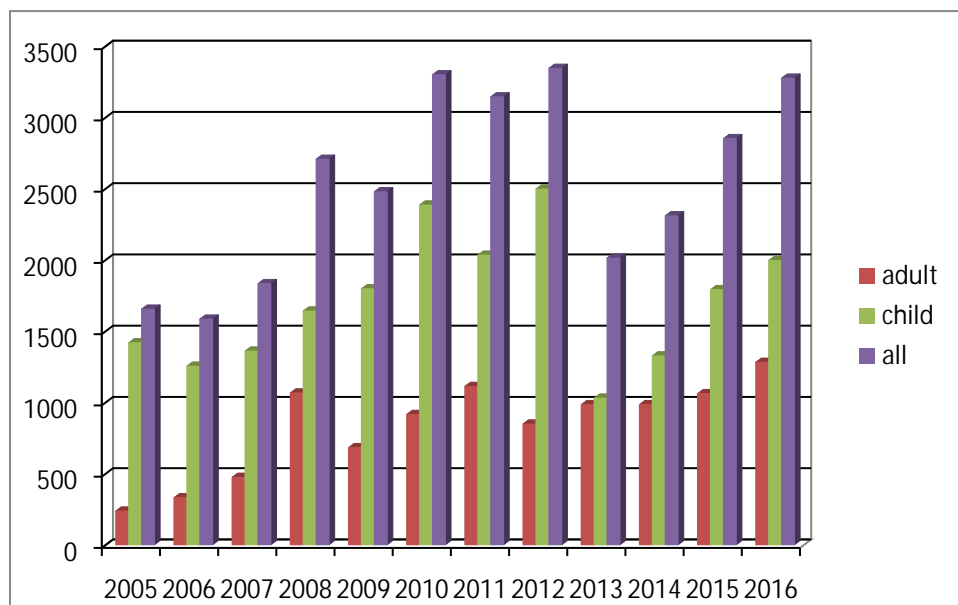
1. the management of the area should be carried out in close co-operation by the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company; the activities of the finished LIFE Programme, such as the conversion of Black pine forests, reduction of game populations, visitor management, guarding and monitoring, should be continued jointly; the area should be provided with human and financial resources commensurate with the site's national and European importance;

Results of the annual agreement of cooperation between the Duna-Ipoly Nationalpark Directorate and the Pilis Forest:

- conservation of habitats: Black pine stand conversion – 200 m<sup>3</sup>
  - monitoring of fenced sample areas – areas keeping big game out
  - monitoring of the whole population of *Linum dolomiticum*
  - monitoring of the Black pine succession
  - employing environmental educator
  - environmental education
  - servicing of fence
2. inside and near the area, permission should be given only for such game population management operations as are strictly consonant with the nature conservation objectives assigned to the area, particularly as regards eradication of the mouflon and reduction of the population of large herbivores to a level compatible with the preservation of the dolomitic grasslands and natural woodlands; these population control operations should be planned on the basis of accurate population monitoring;
- The game population management (like the annual driven game shooting – in 2016 twice) is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. Changes in numbers of big game population, resulting from fence building and the operation of game traps, are monitored also in the frame of the agreement.
3. the fence enclosing the protected area must be maintained in good condition to prevent technical sport activities from encroaching upon it and also to raise the effectiveness of game population regulation;
- Maintaining of the fence is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. There were 200 000 HUF for this purpose this year.
  - We had to make a contract of more than 10 million HUF for the repair of the fences damaged by the freezing rain. The process of the repair works are finished in this April.
  - A new part of fence (1850m) was built and handed over, too in 2016.
4. visitor reception capacity should be increased by organising guided tours outside the most sensitive zones, to make the public more aware of the importance of preserving the habitats in the area; measures should be taken to prevent motor vehicles from crossing the area;
- The environmental educator (new colleague since 2014) holds a nature conservation course for local school children weekly, organizes guided nature trail tours for children regularly.
  - This year the co-operation with the Pilis Forest Company has escalated. The Council of Pilisszentiván joined this co-operation as the third professional partner.
  - The settlement's leadership supports our work too, for example the environmental education work.
  - We organize so many outdoor programmes and series of lectures for the local children (primary school, nursery school) continuously.
  - Our rangers and the environmental educator regularly guides groups in the field to interpret the natural assets. The most popular guided tours are the *Linum dolomiticum* hikes in May. In the last two years more innovative programmes and thematic guided tours were entered. Save the Frogs Day (23/04/2016). We joined the International Arbor and Bird Day (08/09/05/2016) too. We organized Reptile's and Amphibian's Day (04/06/2016), Firebugs and Bats night tours in June, Star-gazing night

tours in August (based on Perseids), Ecotourism and IT-technics (03/09/2016), 'Bug tours' (based on the biggest insect in Europe the bush-cricket (*Saga pedo*), we had 'Land art' tour in October combining arts and hiking.

- Large-scale events were held on World Water Day (22/03/2016) and International Bird Watching Day (01/10/2016). The following programmes were held at these events: hydrobiological tests for children, free guided tours on the nature trail, open-air market of nature publications, bird banding.
- Field exercises were held for university students (several weeks).
- From the year 2016 new opportunities open by a starter European project (VEKOP-4.2.1-15) in which we plan renewal and expansion our visitor centre. The VEKOP has started in this year, we have many tasks ahead of us.
- We applied for an INTERREG HUSK project with Nagykovácsi together. We are going to plan our nature trails renewal financed by this source. This co-operation based on a complex project, that Nagykovácsi has planned for so many years.
- Number of participants of professionally guided tours, nature conservation courses and volunteer activities in 2016: adult 1280, children 1994, all 3274 visitors.



5. regulations must be worked out for horse riding paths in the area; also a mountain bike trail should be designated so as to avoid the fenced and strictly protected area;

- The frame ruling of these subjects changed in the year 2014, by changing the Forest Law (Act nr. 36/2009.). According to this rule horse riding and biking in the forest is free on the roads of forestry.

6. the protected landscape status of the two areas adjoining the special protection area, which were also the subject of the diploma application, should be maintained to keep them functioning properly as buffer zones; construction in these areas should not be allowed;

- no changes this year

7. urbanisation pressure must be handled properly; any new development plans of Nagykovácsi, Pilisszentiván and Piliscsaba should be examined carefully;

- no changes this year

8. co-operation with volunteers (schools, non-governmental organisations, local governments, scouts) must be continued, as well as with local residents, police and civil guards.

- Managing some team building days of different groups (mainly company groups) in the zone C. In these occasions cutting of Black pine, planting of deciduous tree plants or planting wooden equipment of the nature trails was accomplished.
- Leading field exercises for university students (several groups from two universities). The students did some conservation jobs (cutting of Black pine and invasive tree species, planting of deciduous tree plants) and guided tours were held for them to introduce the area and its natural assets.
- The local civil guards help our works (regular patrolling, habitat reconstruction works).
- We have some volunteers helping us regularly in the environmental education works.

**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.

- In the first days of December 2014 freezing rain, ice and strong wind have caused serious natural damages in the woods above 350 metres high in Buda Hills. Numberless amount of trees have broken parts or fallen down and approximately 30-40 % of the fence around the Szénás Hills Protected Area have been damaged. Restoration of damaged fence parts has finished this year. This year during the hunting season, the big game (mainly not the native species) hunting is necessary twice in the fenced area.
- We are planning a comprehensive ex-situ species conservation experiment of *Linum dolomiticum*. We have to research climatic aptitudes of the area, because the population development of *Linum dolomiticum* and the habitat's microclimate is influenced by the global warming, indirectly. We have to research the effect of the climatic 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.

- no other information

## 26. HUNGARY – TIHANY PENINSULA

**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.

- There were no conditions attached to the last renewal of the European Diploma.

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

- The development of the management plan is in progress. 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 has been able to 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 Belsö; »

- 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 180 000 so far. The National Park Directorate has renewed the exhibition of visitor centre. A new geological part is waiting for the visitors, including the topic of Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark, in which the area of Tihany Peninsula is included. The Lavender House Visitor Centre is the Eastern Gate of the geopark. The renewal will be continued next year.

« 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. A new project financed by a state-tender ( Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) has been started by the national park to renew the most public nature trails on the peninsula. Detailed plans are in progress.

« 5. keep the balance between closed forested areas and open areas (meadows with hedges and bushes); »

- The project to force back invasive weed species subsidized by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme) was finished in 2015. About 60 hectares of special pasture land with oak trees and wild fruit trees has been reconstructed. The achieved results have been maintained with mechanical and manual activities by the national park.

« 6. encourage farming and wine-growing practices consistent with the conservation of natural and landscape assets; »

- From the point of view of natural heritage, good practices in farming and wine-growing have been encouraged by law and recommendation, too. The national park experts participate in controlling how farmers receive state-subsidies due to nature friendly farming practices.

« 7. encourage the transfer of management rights on fishing in Lake Belsö to the Balaton Uplands National Park; »

- The management rights of Lake Belsö were transferred to the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate by the state in 2013. Since then the National Park has had a bigger opportunity to influence 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. A new project financed by a state-tender ( Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) has been started to improve water quality and restore the natural state of the lake by the national park.

« 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 Tihany Peninsula the National Park Directorate has not been able to buy new land 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 project had been finished with significant results in 2015. The achieved results have been maintained with mechanical and manual activities by the national park.

« 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 as other parts of the protected area. The project of forcing back invasive weed species involves this area, too.

**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 significant changes have occurred since the last report.

**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 have occurred since the last report.

**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.

- No other information.

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

6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated

- The water level of the lakes on the peninsula (Külső Lake and Belső Lake) has unambiguously shown an increasing tendency in the past period, although the average annual precipitation did not change. In our opinion the process is caused by the changing distribution and intensity of precipitation. The increase of the water level is an ecologically favorable effect in the case of these shallow lakes.

6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

- As a result of our habitat rehabilitation on Lake Külső, some new nestled bird species have been detected, for example the red-crested pochards (*Netta rufina*) and little cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*).
- Experts of national park have reintroduced the third european ground squirrel population onto the peninsula this year as part of the Raptorspraylife project.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context
  - 7.1. Cultural heritage
    - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
      - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
  - 7.2. Socio-economic context
    - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context
      - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
8. Education and scientific interest
  - 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
    - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
      - The two weeks long Lavender Festival at the end of June has turned into a tradition. The event is attended by a few thousand people, the national and local media and press is also present. Experts of the National Park lead guided tours to the Geyser Field and to the Old Lavender Field with several hundred participants.
      - The guided tours lead by our professional guides have stayed very popular, during this period about 150 groups participated in those programs on different routes of the peninsula. Special "geo-tours" were guided by trained geotour guides and by the geoscientist of the National Park on the peninsula to show most of the geological values.
      - Two presentations were held in the visitor centre about UNESCO Global Geoparks.
      - Four geoactivity workshops were held for families in the visitor centre, interpreting the one time volcanism of the peninsula.
      - 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.
      - Experts of the National Park have permanently organized special activities for children and families in the activity room of the Lavender House Visitor Centre.
      - 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 about 30 000 visitors annually. The renewal of the exhibition has started, the geological part of that was remade this year, including the topic of the Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark.
      - A new attraction is in progress called “Citellus-show” as a part of the “Raptorspraylife” project (LIFE13 NAT/HU/000183). Several hidden cameras will be taken to the field of the ground squirrel population next to Lake Belső. Visitors will be able to watch the liveview of hidden cameras or archive movies and information about the ground squirrel on three monitors outside and one more screen seated inside 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.
  - an invitation of the national park as leader of the Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Geopark to the Lavender Festival in Provence gave possibility to introduce the peninsula and the Lavender House Visitor Centre to possible French visitors.
  - 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.
- 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (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.
- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- visit of Colleen Bell, the USA ambassador to Hungary and her team on the peninsula and in the Lavender House Visitor Centre
  - visits of experts, mayors and tourism partners of other UNESCO Global Geoparks (Novohrad–Nógrád, Idrija, Karawanken, Hateg Country Dinosaur); field visit of the members of the Hungarian Geopark Committee
  - the yearly consultation with trained geotour-guide partners in the Lavender House Visitor Centre
- 8.2. Scientific research
- 8.2.1. 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. The programme has had scientific publications, see at 8.2.2.
- 8.2.2. Scientific publications
- Groundwater flow pattern and related environmental phenomena in complex geologic setting based on integrated model construction (Ádám Tóth, Tímea Havril, Szilvia Simon, Attila Galsa, Fernando A. Monteiro Santos, Imre Müller, Judit Mádl-Szonyi), *Journal of Hydrology* 539 (2016) 330–344
9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)
- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)
- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)
- 10.1. Improvements made
  - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
    - We forced back the reed on Külső Lake to raise the proportion of open water surfaces from 10 to 20 per cent. This work was necessary to save the mosaic of habitats. Several floating plant-islands appeared on the lake with valuable plant species, e.g. than the marsh shield fern (*Thelypteris palustris*).
    - The area of the special pasture land with oak trees and wild fruit trees has increased by forcing back scrubs and invasive wood species. We are planning to managed this area by grazing. The necessary equipment to the grazing (electrical fence, watering, e.t.c.) will be obtained next year and will be financed by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme).
    - The National park has planted a new lavender plantation on 3 hectares to preserve and to develop the tradition of lavender growing on the peninsula. The reconstruction of the almost 90 years old first lavender field has continued.
  - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
    - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
  - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
    - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
  - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
    - Several information boards and direction-boards along the Lóczy-Geysir 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.
    - A new lookout tower made of wood has been built by state forestry on the western part of the peninsula. The approach of the lookout tower is possible only by walk on nature trails.
    - The renewal of the nature trails of the peninsula financed by a state tender (Environment and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme) has begun. The detailed plans are in progress. The information boards, paths, stairs of the Lóczy Lajos nature trail and the connected pathways will be renewed. A new nature trail will be created around Lake Belső. Attached to the nature trails new attractions will be installed into the park of the Lavender House Visitor Centre.
  - 10.1.5. Waste management
    - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
  - 10.1.6. 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. The production of domestic hot water of the Lavender Open Air School is also operated by solar collectors.
- 10.2. Management
  - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
    - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
  - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

#### 10.2.3. Internal policing measures

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

#### 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

- None.

### 11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

We include the European Diploma award in promotional materials, online platforms, presentations, guided tours and other possible channels in use to inform the public and we are convinced that this award raises the acknowledgement and the appreciation of the area.

The three Hungarian European Diploma areas are also mentioned during these programmes as we cooperate with these areas.

## 27. IRELAND – THE BURREN REGION

**6. 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 Irish authorities should ensure the budget for the maintenance and development of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; *DAHG have continued funding of the BLP team in 2013, 2014 and 2015 and the funding of the circa 160 farmers has also continued. NPWS (DAHG) and the BLP team continue to engage with all stakeholders with the aim of ensuring the BLP is expanded under the new RDP and in clarifying the detail of such an inclusion. The identification by DAFM of the BLP as a flagship Locally-led Agri-Environment Scheme to be funded under the RDP from 2016 is a significant development. This will require an amendment to the current RDP before the end of the year, with a view to have the new funding regime in place by February 2016. This will include an increased number of participating farmers.*

2. the national and local authorities should prevent possible negative environmental damage from the surrounding areas of the Burren Region; *in addition to the management of farming within the site by BLP staff, there is also management of compliance with the Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Acts by regionally based NPWS staff, under the direction of Dr Enda Mooney. Conservation rangers for the site also engage with the BLP team in terms of ensuring that all proposed works are considered appropriately in the context of the overall conservation interests of the site. The implementation and regulation of cross compliance, EIA (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 and the local planning acts ensures that negative environmental damage is avoided.*

**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. to encourage the participation of more farmers in the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; *the number of BLP clients for 2015 is 160 over 15,000ha. Annual spend in 2015 is circa €1m to participating farmers. BLP work is currently focusing primarily on the completion of technical and administrative checks on all 2015 plans. All contracted works are on schedule.*

2. to plan subsequent steps in the second phase of European Union funding of the BurrenLIFE project through the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; *see Condition 1 above.*

3. to stimulate the further development of the Burren Community Charter; *the BLP, the Burren Connect Project, the Burren IFA, the Burrenbeo Trust, the Heritage Council, Clare County Council and Galway County Council all continue to work together in developing and implementing the Burren Community Charter.*

4. to stimulate further development of sustainable ecotourism and practice in the Burren Region; *the Burrenbeo Trust continues to place emphasis on sustainable ecotourism and promotes the Burren as a “learning landscape”. The Learning Landscape Symposium took place in July 2014 and brought together leading national and international specialists on how best to use the Burren as a learning resource through different principles and practice in place-based learning. This included keynote speakers, workshops and fieldtrips to investigate ways to use local resources to make learning a richer, more exciting and rewarding educational experience. This all took place in the Burren, the ultimate ‘outdoor classroom’.*

5. to discourage mass tourism in the Burren Region which does not accord with the principles of sustainable development; *The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark (which covers much of the EDPA area) has an executive board comprising a manager, geologist, tourism co-ordinator and communications co-ordinator. This in turn is led by a steering committee representing Clare County Council, Geological Survey of Ireland, Failte Ireland, Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Heritage Council, NUIG, UCD, Burren Ecotourism Network, Burren IFA and Burrenbeo Trust. The Geopark works with local communities and groups to develop work programmes, such as educational programmes and trails. The Geopark has also forged a special relationship with the Burren Ecotourism Network. Both are working closely together to develop the Geopark as a world class, accredited sustainable tourism destination. The Geopark’s work programme in the development of the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination, in balancing conservation and tourism, in training and educational programmes and in developing policy is being funded to 2017 by EU LIFE.*

6. to encourage volunteers to participate in the sustainable management of the Burren Region; *the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers is a voluntary community that has been active in 2015 and works towards the sustainable management of the Burren by addressing key conservation issues and needs in the region. The Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers was born out of a need for hands-on conservation workers. In a region of decreasing rural population key conservation issues such as scrub encroachment and the rebuilding of stone walls are becoming harder to tackle and the conservation volunteers provide a very important resource to address this.*

**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.

*A positive development regarding site management has been the extension of the Burren Programme budget and timeframe. The Burren team, who manage the BP, have been awarded a 5-year contract, during which the team will oversee the expansion of the BP across the entire Burren (target area: 30,000ha).*

*Currently the Burren Programme staff complement is as follows: Sharon Parr (F/T), Brendan Dunford (F/T), Paula McHale (F/T), Anne Mullen (4 days per week) and Bryony Williams (3 days per week), Michael Lynch continues to offer Field Monument Advisor support to the BP on a part-time (2.5d days per week) basis.*

*In addition to the management of farming within the site by BP staff, there is also management of compliance with the Habitats Directive and Wildlife Acts by regionally based NPWS staff, under the direction of Dr Enda Mooney. Conservation rangers for the site also engage with the BP team in terms*

*of ensuring that all proposed works are considered appropriately in terms of the overall conservation interests of the site.*

**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.

*There have been no changes to the boundary of the European Diploma area since the adoption of the resolution.*

**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.

Education and Communication:

*The staff of the BP, along with their colleagues in the Burrenbeo Trust, have undertaken a large number of educational and communication activities in 2016. These include:*

*Hosting international conferences on themes including 'Nature-friendly Farming' and 'Place Based Learning'*

*Co-ordinated festivals including Burren in Bloom and the Burren Winterage Weekend*

*Carried out 10-week heritage-education courses in local schools (4 primary, 2 secondary)*

*Organised monthly heritage walks and talks including walks for disabled groups, night-time walks etc*

*Hosted a number of international study groups – including the European Commissioner and members of his Cabinet on a day long visit – with a focus on farming for conservation*

*Featured on National TV, Radio and Newspapers*

## **11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

The EDPA award has positively influenced the decision to expand the Burren Programme – which has been fundamental to the management of the Burren's natural and cultural heritage. This means that up to 30,000ha of the Burren region, including most of the Natura 2000 designated land, will be managed under BP, a very positive long-term investment in the future of the region and its communities.

## **28. ITALY - ABRUZZO, LAZIO AND MOLISE NATIONAL PARK**

### **Conditions :**

**1. adopter définitivement le plan de gestion du Parc national (PNALM), dans un délai d'un an au plus, soit d'ici la réunion du Groupe de spécialistes en 2013 ;**

Le processus pour l'approbation du Plan du Parc n'est pas encore terminé. Le Plan est à l'examen des Régions concernées (Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise).

Le Plan de gestion des Sites du réseaux Natura 2000 du Parc (IT7110205 et IT7120132) est sous approbation de la Région Abruzzo.

Dans le mois de mars 2016 le Ministère de l'Environnement a écrit aux régions italiennes et aux aires protégées pour nous informer que l'Italie est soumise à une procédure d'infraction par la Commission européenne car elle n'a pas encore désigné les sites d'importance communautaires comme zones spéciales de conservation. Pour faire ce passage est nécessaire établir les mesures de conservations par chaque site nécessaires pour éviter la détérioration des habitats ainsi que les perturbations des espèces pour lesquelles les sites ont été désignés. Dans sa lettre le Ministère a dit que pour les sites à l'intérieur des aires protégées les Conseils directifs des Parcs peuvent approuver leurs propres mesures de



conservations ou leurs propres Plan de Gestion des sites communautaires si quelqu'un entre eux eut le Plan.

Les Régions Lazio et Abruzzo ont écrit au parc pour nous demander d'approuver des mesures de conservations.

La Région Lazio nous a envoyé les mesures de conservations qu'ils ont fixé pour les sites du Lazio qui se trouvent à l'intérieur du parc (sites IT6050018 et IT6050020). Les Mesures étaient fixées en accord avec le Parc. Les mesures ont été approuvées par le Conseil Directif avec la Délibération n.27 du 30 septembre 2016 (en pièce-jointe).

La Région des Abruzzes nous a invité à approuver initialement les mesures indiquées dans le Plan de Gestion des sites IT7110205 et IT7120132. Ensuite ils nous ont envoyé des mesure de conservation plus générales rédigé par la Région en collaboration avec les aires protégées régional et nationaux qui se trouvent dans le territoire des Abruzzes.

Les Mesures sont à l'examen du Conseil Directif du Parc.

Après l'approbation des mesures le Ministère de l'Environnement pourra désigner les Zones Spéciales de Conservations (ZSC). La désignation des ZSC IT7110205, IT7120132, IT6050018, IT6050020 qui intéressent le 70% du territoire du Parc signifie, en absence du Plan du Parc, avoir le territoire soumis à des mesures nécessaires à éviter détérioration des habitats et perturbations des espèces. Tous les perturbations pourront être donc sanctionnées.

Le parc donc, en absence du Plan, a mis en œuvre plusieurs instruments alternatifs : le Plan de Gestion de sites du réseaux Natura 2000, les mesures de conservations pour la désignation des ZSC, l'approbation du Plan des pâturages.

## **2. prendre toutes dispositions utiles pour que :**

- **conformément à la Loi-cadre sur les aires protégées en Italie, des zones périphériques soient créées sur les territoires des régions Abruzzes et Molise, d'ici fin 2013, et qu'une réglementation de la chasse tenant compte de la nécessité de minimiser les dérangements de l'ours au cours de l'automne, soit établie dans ces zones et appliquée à compter de la saison cynégétique 2013-2014 au plus tard ;**

La situation est resté la même de l'année passée. En tous cas la réglementation de la chasse pour la saison 2016-2017 des trois Régions a diversifié le système de chasse dans la Zone Périphérique du Parc par rapport au reste du territoire régional. En particulier:

a) Région des Abruzzes : la chasse à différentes espèces de gibier s'ouvre le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre. Le système de chasse au sanglier est celle de la soi-disant " girata" (un groupe de chasseurs avec un ou deux chiens spécialisés et certifié par ENCI pour la recherche du sanglier) ou de la chasse à l'affût pour minimiser l'impact de la chasse sur la période d'alimentation de l'ours en automne. La région a aussi divisé le territoire de la Zone Périphérique du Parc en deux parties : dans la Zone C1 est possible la chasse au sanglier à l'affût ou en " girata" avec un seul chien. Dans la zone C2 est possible la chasse à l'affût et la chasse en petit groupe avec un seul chien qui n'est pas spécialisé et certifié pour la recherche du sanglier.

La Région a aussi créé une autre zone au dehors de la Zone Périphérique du Parc : une zone où la présence de l'ours est moins continue mais significative, zone considérée comme aire d'expansion et de connexion. Dans cette zone la chasse au sanglier est prévue à l'affût et en groupe mais avec un seul chien.

La Région en plus a étendu le système de chasse au sanglier créé par la Zone Périphérique du Parc à trois autres municipalités dehors de la Zone Périphérique mais en contact direct avec cette Zone (Municipalité de Bugnara, Pettorano, Rocca Pia)

b) Région Lazio : la Région a divisé la Zone Périphérique du Parc en deux sous-zones, A e B. Dans la sous-zone A situé tout de suite au dehors des limites du Parc la chasse est interdite. Dans la zone B la chasse au sanglier ouvre le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre.

c) Région Molise : la Région a fixé des règles particulières pour la chasse au sanglier, au lièvre, au renard à l'intérieur de la Zone Périphérique du Parc. En particulier :

-renard : ouverture de la chasse au 1<sup>er</sup> novembre, chasse à l'affût

-lièvre : ouverture de la chasse 15 octobre, chasse en équipe avec seulement deux chiens

-sanglier : ouverture de la chasse 1<sup>er</sup> novembre, chasse en équipe avec au maximum 10 chasseurs et un seul chien, chasse à l'affût.

- **la réglementation interdisant les activités pastorales dans la zone A du Parc national soit appliquée de façon absolue et sans délai, et que les élus locaux soient sensibilisés sur cette question ;**

Le Parc, avec son corps de vigilance et avec l'aide des agents forestiers, a continué l'œuvre de vigilance sur les pâturages dans la zone A.

Le Conseil Directif du Parc a approuvé avec la Délibération n.6/2016 du 23 janvier 2016 le Plan de Gestion des pâturages du Parc : le Plan analyse du point de vue floristique, de la végétation et de la productivité tous les pâturages du parc, fixe par chaque habitat de pâturage le charge de bétail par hectare et la durée de la saison de pâturage.

Le Plan a été publié sur le site du Parc.

- **une concertation soit engagée sans délai avec les autorités municipales des communes du Parc national, pour la fermeture matérielle des voies d'accès à la zone diplômée, les plus critiques du point de vue de la conservation de la grande faune ; cette concertation devra conduire à ce que des dispositifs de fermeture et une réglementation appropriés tenant compte des droits des tiers locaux, soient établis d'ici fin 2013 ;**

A la fin du Projet Life on a fermées avec des barrages 20 voies d'accès.

#### **Recommandations :**

- 1. démarrer la mise en œuvre du plan d'action PATOM pour la protection de la population d'ours dans les meilleurs délais, facilitée par l'administration du PNALM ;**

Au début de l'année courant est entré dans l'Autorité de Gestion le Parc National de la Majella car à ce moment est l'autre aire protégée avec un petit nucléo d'ours qui comprend aussi deux femelles. Dans le même temps l'Autorité de Gestion a fixé les objectifs pour la période 2016-2018 (document en pièce-jointe) : tous les membres de l'Autorité sont engagés à rejoindre les objectifs fixé par chaque membre. Entre les objectifs nous pouvons souligner en particulier :

-l'institution du réseau de monitoring de l'ours auquel participent le trois Régions, le parc de la Majella, le Parc des Abruzzes, le Corps Forestier. Le réseaux de monitoring a préparé un protocole de monitoring et est en train de activer la formation de bénévoles qui travailleront sur les territoires des trois Régions ;

-la création d'un système de gestion des ours problématique au dehors du Parc dans lequel on voit la participation de la Région des Abruzzes, des scientifiques du Parc de la Majella et des réserves naturelles de la Région des Abruzzes, du Corps Forestier;

-système de monitoring sanitaire de la faune sauvage (sanglier en particulier) : les Régions Lazio et Molise en particulier ont indiqués entre leurs objectifs l'activation d'un certain nombre de mesures pour le contrôle sanitaire des carcasses d'animaux sauvages morts, le contrôle des sangliers tués par les chasseurs, le contrôle des chiens errants ;

-dans le Parc des Abruzzes devra être institué un noyau de chien chargé de localiser les boulettes pour faire obstacle aux braconniers soit dans le Parc soit dans sa zone périphérique;

-le Parc des Abruzzes, de plus, a fixé comme ses propres objectifs : la réglementation en zone critique pour l'ours des activités touristiques comme promenade avec les chiens, excursion en mountain bike, excursion à cheval, bear watching, photographie en nature ; création d'un système de prime pour les éleveurs qui travaillent en zone critique pour l'ours en suivant des critères de durabilité et de cohabitation .

Le Parc a approuvé avec une Délibération du Conseil Directif (n.12/2016 du 29 avril 2016) le nouvel accord 2016-2018 et le document avec tous les objectifs du nouvel accord approuvés par l'Autorité de Gestion.

**2. poursuivre la réflexion en vue de l'inclusion à la zone diplômée des secteurs limitrophes du PNALM, réputés d'intérêt biologique majeur pour les grands carnivores, l'ours et le loup en particulier ;**

Le Parc est en train de préparer une proposition avec tous les zones au dehors de ses limites qui sont écologiquement très importantes parce qu'ils ont une valeur naturelle élevée ou présentent des particularités pour certaines espèces faunistiques ou floristiques ou sont en continuation d'habitats prioritaires.

**3. achever d'ici fin 2012 l'élaboration du plan de développement économique et social, comme prévu par l'administration du PNALM, en vue de le mettre en œuvre rapidement ;**

Pour la recommandation 3 rien de nouveau à signaler.

**4. accroître substantiellement les moyens humains et financiers attribués aux activités scientifiques du PNALM et les adapter aux problématiques complexes auxquelles le parc devra faire face au cours des prochaines années et veiller à ce que ses capacités en général lui permettent d'accomplir ses missions de conservation et de contrôle convenablement ;**

Le Ministère de l'Environnement a mis à disposition des aires protégées italiennes de l'argent pour améliorer la gestion du patrimoine faunistique et floristiques des Parcs Nationaux Italiens.

Pour l'année 2016 le Parc a reçu 125.000 euros en total. Le financement 2016 sera destiné surtout au programme de gestion de l'ours brun marsicano. Une partie de ce financement sera destinée aux chauves-souris pour un projet avec des autres parcs nationaux italiens.

Le Président du Parc en plus a destiné beaucoup des ressources du budget annuel du Parc aux objectifs de conservations. Dans le budget 2017 plus de 200.000 euros seront destinés aux activités du Service Scientifique : monitorages des espèces prioritaires, gestion des ours, amélioration des instruments techniques pour les activités de recherche, création d'un GIS (système d'information géographique) qui nous donnera la possibilité d'avoir un modèle de gestion des espèces les plus importants du Parc.

**5. étudier la possibilité d'assermenter l'ensemble des personnels techniques pour le constat des infractions à la réglementation du PNALM ;**

Pour la recommandation 5 rien de nouveau à signaler

**6. engager une réflexion sur l'utilité d'une gestion dirigée du cerf, en liaison avec l'amélioration de l'état de conservation du chamois ;**

Pour la recommandation 6 rien de nouveau à signaler

**7. mener un effort particulier en faveur du soutien des activités de tourisme rural en périphérie du PNALM ;**

Le Parc a continué son effort pour le soutien du tourisme soit dans la zone centrale que en périphérie avec l'organisation d'événements promotionnels des produits (fromages, miel), la création d'un nouvel Centre de Visite dans le village de Pizzone (Région Molise), une nouvelle réglementation pour l'utilisation du

logo du Parc. Dans le même temps le parc a donné aux opérateurs du tourisme la possibilité de faire promotion de leurs activités à travers le site du Parc même.

#### **8. engager une réflexion avec les maires des communes sur la question du nourrissage des animaux d'élevage et de la faune sauvage.**

Les points de nourrissage artificiels à l'intérieur du Parc sont fortement réduits. Au dehors du Parc dans quelques municipalités les éleveurs ont encore l'habitude de créer des points de nourrissage pour leur bétail. Malheureusement le pouvoir du Parc au dehors de ses limites est complètement nul et donc nous pouvons seulement solliciter les maires des municipalités à interdire aux éleveurs la création des points de nourrissage.

#### **Gestion du site**

Pendant l'année 2016 le Parc, en collaboration avec ENPA (Association de protection des animaux) et les autorités sanitaires des régions a achevé le Plan de Gestion des chiens errants : les actions prévues par le Plan sont la vaccination des chiens, l'inscription des chiens au registre national de chiens, la stérilisation des chiens par adhésion volontaire de leurs propriétaires.

En total :

- chien soumis à vaccination 1103
- chien enregistrés dans le registre national 769
- chien soumis à stérilisation 46

Les activités du Plan seront continuées pendant l'année 2017

Pendant l'année 2016 le Parc a signé un accord avec ENEL (le principal gestionnaire d'électricité italien) pour la gestion du Lac de Barrea, lac artificiel créé par un barrage dans les années '50 pour la production d'électricité et donc géré par ENEL. Dans le protocole l'ENEL s'est engagé à ne faire pas descendre le niveau du lac au-dessous d'une altitude de 963 mètres : l'accord donc permettra de conserver le niveau de l'eau pendant l'hiver à un bon niveau pour la présence de la faune, surtout les oiseaux. Le lac en effet aura une profondeur telle que ne sera pas complètement gelé et donc pourra accueillir les oiseaux de passage et leur fournir du nourrissage.

Pendant l'activité du réseau de monitoring des ours ont été vues deux femelles avec ourson au dehors du Parc :

- une femelle avec trois oursons à Mont Serralunga situé entre le Parc et la zone nommée "Monti Simbruini" à la frontière avec la Région Lazio
- une femelle avec un ourson a fréquenté une aire qui s'étend du Parc Régional du Velino au Parc National de la Majella

Comme chaque année nous avons fait aussi le comptage de femelles d'ours avec ourson dans le territoire du Parc : pendant ce comptage nous avons vu 5 femelles avec en total 7 oursons.

Donc avec les données du dehors du parc nous pouvons dire avec certitude qu'à l'intérieur de la population d'ours brun marsicano pour l'année courante il y a 7 femelles qui se sont reproduites et le nombre total d'oursons pour l'année 2016 a été 11.

#### **Frontières**

Rien à signaler. Les frontières du Parc sont restées les mêmes.

#### **Autres informations**

Pendant l'été 2016 le Parc a produit son premier rapport ours : dans le rapport on a donné des informations et données sur l'ours dans le Parc des Abruzzes mais aussi dans les autres aires protégées de la Région des Abruzzes (en pièce-jointe). En particulier on y trouve : animaux capturés, animaux morts, nombre de

femelles avec ourson (comptage 2015), dommages causés par les ours et argent payé pour l'indemnisation, activités pour la gestion des ours problématiques, information sur les ours au dehors du Parc (Parc National de la Majella, Parc Régional du Velino, Reserve régional du Mont Genzana).

Dans le printemps 2015 nous avons trouvé une jeune oursonne, nommée Morena, chez le village de Villavallelonga. L'oursonne a été portée dans un enclos loin des personnes avec l'objectif de la laisser de nouveau en nature après quelques mois. A décembre 2015 l'oursonne a été laissée en nature après avoir bâti une tanière artificiel dans laquelle elle aurait pu passer l'hiver. La femelle n'a pas utilisé la tanière artificiel mais elle a cherché une autre tanière dans laquelle a passé l'hiver. A travers le collier émetteur dont l'animal était équipée nous avons pu la suivre soit dans l'hiver soit au printemps quand elle est sortie de la tanière. L'oursonne est restée dans une zone de pâturage pendant plusieurs mois. Malheureusement elle a été trouvée morte dans le mois de juin. L'examen de la carcasse nous a conduit à causes de mort naturels : l'animal présentait une infection aux dents que elle avait interdit de se nourrir avec facilité.

Le procédé de candidature UNESCO de la forêt de Val Cervara continue. Dans le mois d'octobre nous avons reçu la visite de l'inspecteur UICN chargé de faire une évaluation des sites soumis au procédé de candidature. L'inspecteur, Mme Lu Zhi, a visité les sites du parc, a rencontré les stakeholders concernés par la candidature, a reçu tous les matériaux scientifiques relatifs aux sites.

A la fin de l'année elle enverra sa relation au Comité de l'UICN. La décision finale nous sera communiquée le mois de mai 2017.

Le Parc a continué à utiliser le logo du Diplôme sur son site internet, sur les panneaux qui sont situés sur les routes principales à l'entrée du Parc, dans le Centre de Visite de Pescasseroli.

## **29. ITALY – GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK**

**1. Conditions :** Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

### **Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso**

*Le plan de gestion du parc sera formellement approuvé au plus tard d'ici à 2012.*

Après l'adoption du plan de gestion du Parc par les Régions Piémont et Vallée d'Aoste, le Conseil du Parc, selon les règles de la loi 3.12.1991, n.394, a donné son avis sur les propositions de modification avancées par les établissements publics et les citoyens et transféré le texte du plan ainsi intégré aux Régions pour l'approbation finale. Le plan contient aussi le plan de gestion du Site d'Intérêt Communautaire IT1201000, qui a été extrait, après demande du Ministère de l'Environnement, pour lui permettre d'accélérer la procédure de désignation de la zone spéciale de préservation dans les temps demandés par l'Union européenne.

**2. Recommandations :** Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso

*1. veiller à ce que le financement soit essentiellement assuré par l'État, les régions et les provinces et intègre adéquatement d'autres sources de financement ;*

Le montant final de la contribution ordinaire annuelle de l'État en 2016 a été de €5.903.218,41 et en outre une dernière contribution de €125.000,00 a été payée pour les activités de protection de l'environnement et de la biodiversité. Pour mémoire, l'évolution de cette contribution ordinaire annuelle est la suivante en

2013 €6.419.729,44, en 2014 €6.132.753,10, en 2015 €6.552.395,87, en 2016 €5.903.218,41.

Cette contribution, dans une période de crise économique et de réduction généralisée de la dépense publique, reste néanmoins satisfaisante.

*2. doter le parc national du personnel adéquat au niveau exécutif afin de permettre au directeur de se consacrer aux tâches essentielles, notamment sur le plan stratégique ;*

Les lois 148/2011 et 138/2012 ont mis en place des réductions du personnel dans toute l'administration publique. Le Parc a eu la chance de pouvoir maintenir sa dotation sur le personnel actuellement existant (88 personnes). Par conséquent, il n'est pas possible à ce stade de prévoir une augmentation du personnel et, plus encore, au niveau du personnel exécutif. Le Parc a demandé de pouvoir procéder au remplacement du personnel qui a quitté le service et a obtenu et réalisé le recrutement de 3 gardes à plein service.

*3. défendre activement la prise en compte de mesures de protection des valeurs naturelles et paysagères dans les plans et les décisions d'urbanisation.*

Déjà actualisé au plan territorial paysager de la Région Vallée d'Aoste, le plan du parc en 2016 a été vérifié par rapport aux règles de la Région Piémont, ce qui a permis une meilleure protection des valeurs paysagères. En tout cas la défense active des valeurs naturelles et paysagères fait appel aux mesures de protection de la loi 394/91 (art.11 alinéa 2) et à toute décision pertinente d'autorisations pour modifier la zone protégée (art.13 alinéa 1).

*4. intégrer les valeurs des forêts comme écosystèmes dans le cadre de l'élaboration des plans de gestion forestiers ;*

Le plan du parc, déjà en application, est dans la phase finale d'approbation par les Régions et contient les indications pour la conservation des forêts et l'amélioration de leur stabilité, tout en respectant l'écosystème forestier et les habitats d'intérêt communautaire. Comme toute la surface du Parc est comprise dans le Site d'Intérêt Communautaire SIC/ZPS IT1201000 le plan contient à l'intérieur un plan de gestion avec les prescriptions applicables aux interventions forestières et les critères pour le maintien de la biodiversité pour tous les habitats forestiers, ainsi que des mesures de conservation ponctuelles pour chacun d'eux.

2. On a appliqué sur le terrain ces indications pour l'aménagement des modestes parcelles sur lesquelles des abattages des forêts ont été demandés.

*5. poursuivre les recherches de compatibilité et de synergies entre exploitation agricole et préservation de la diversité biologique ;*

En 2016 la première année du projet qui vise à appliquer des mesures de conservation actives afin de maintenir les prairies semi-naturelles à leur niveau de biodiversité a été achevée. En particulier, le programme de recherche vise à :

- évaluer les effets d'une bonne gestion pastorale sur la biodiversité végétale et animale;
- comparer le développement des zones gérées et non gérées pour quantifier la perte ou le gain en biodiversité dans différentes conditions micro-climatiques et d'utilisation du territoire. Le monitoring a commencé avant l'aménagement pastoral et poursuivra prenant en examen les différentes composantes de l'écosystème. Se sont poursuivies les bonnes pratiques de gestion des pâturages pour la conservation de la biodiversité dans les zones test identifiés dans le cadre du plan de développement rural.

*6. éviter tous nouveaux projets de captage des ressources en eau à des fins de production électrique, à l'exception de microcentrales dûment autorisées par le parc national ;*

En 2016 aucun projet de captage de ressources en eau à des fins de production électrique n'a été présenté.

*7. mettre en place un conseil scientifique consultatif ou tout autre mécanisme susceptible d'apporter la*

*contribution de la communauté scientifique à la gestion du parc.*

Le conseil scientifique consultatif n'a pas encore été créé.

**3. Gestion du site :** Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

#### **Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso**

Nouvelles observations d'espèces comprises dans les annexes de la directive CE «Habitat»:

- Gypaète barbu (*Gypaetus barbatus*): Pour la quatrième année consécutive, les gardes du Parc ont pu documenter le succès de reproduction de l'espèce à l'intérieur de l'aire protégée. Pendant l'hiver 2015-été 2016 ont eu résultat positif les nidifications de tous les trois nids présent dans l'aire protégée ou dans les immédiates limites : en vallée de Rhêmes, Valsavarenche et Cogne où un nouveau couple s'est reproduit avec succès. L'envol des trois poussins a eu lieu dans les premières semaines d'Août dans tous les trois nids.

- Loup (*Canis lupus*): Le loup est dorénavant une présence stable dans le parc avec un couple qui s'est reproduit en Val Soana en 2016. Signalisations fréquentes ont eu lieu dans la haute vallée de l'Orco aussi, avec cinq événements de prédation sur les moutons. Dans cette vallée, la reproduction n'est pas encore documentée. Vers la fin de l'été la surveillance avec pièges photographiques et l'action continue d'observation part les gardes du parc a permis de détecter individus ou petites meutes (jusqu'à 4 individus ensemble) aussi dans les vallées de Cogne, Rhêmes et Valsavarenche. Cela signifie qu'en 2016 l'espèce est présente dans tout le territoire du parc.- Muscardin (*Muscardinus avellanarius*): les enquêtes menées le long de gradients d'altitude ont conduit à la découverte de nouvelles localisations de cette espèce dans la zone protégée, dont une est de grande importance puisque située à plus de 2000 m d'altitude. Pendant l'été 2016 on a organisé un plan de monitoring pour le 2017 pour mieux comprendre la distribution et l'état de conservation de l'espèce.

- Présence et nidifications de rapaces en directive: les reliefs sur la présence d'espèces de rapaces nocturnes ont continué également en 2016, avec la confirmation d'une bonne distribution de Chouette chevêchette (*Glaucidium passerinum*), de Chouette de Tengmalm (*Aegolius funereus*), Hibou moyen-duc (*Asio otus*) et Chouette hulotte (*Strix aluco*). Le Hibou grand-duc (*Bubo Bubo*) ne semble plus être présent parmi les espèces nicheuses, même si signalé dans le côté Piémontais du Parc. Au printemps 2016, la nidification du Faucon pèlerin (*Falco peregrinus*) a été vérifiée en Vallée de Soana; la nidification doit être encore confirmée en Vallée de l'Orco sur les deux sites de Frera et San Lorenzo.- Invertébrés. La présence à différentes altitudes et périodes de papillons compris dans la directive Habitats a été évaluée dans le cadre du projet de monitoring de la biodiversité animale. En ce qui concerne en particulier *Euphydryas aurinia* la surveillance des nids visant à identifier les besoins écologiques des stades larvaires a continué. En été 2016 un projet axé à la recherche du Coléoptère bostriche *Stephanopachys substriatus* (Paykul, 1800) et à la collecte préliminaire de données sur la faune entomologique xylophage a été également lancé. L'étude, tout en ne permettant pas de confirmer la présence signalée dans le passé de *Stephanopachys substriatus*, a révélé la présence de certaines espèces quasi menacées selon la Liste rouge des coléoptères saproxyliques italiens.

- Éradication d'espèces exotiques: l'action d'éradication expérimentale de l'omble de fontaine (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), un salmonidé allochtone introduit dans plusieurs lacs alpins du parc dans les années 60, a continué. Le projet se déroule dans le cadre du projet LIFE+ BIOAQUAE (Amélioration de la biodiversité aquatique des écosystèmes Alpains) financé par la Commission européenne, dont le Parc est promoteur et seul partenaire. Cette espèce exotique a disparue de tous les 4 sites d'intervention à la fin de l'été 2016. Le rétablissement des écosystèmes est très évident avec le retour d'invertébrés aquatiques

(dytiques et trichoptères et formes larvaires de diptères) et la résurgence importante de pontes d'œufs et de têtards de *Rana temporaria*.

- Actions de conservation active : lors de la réalisation de l'échantillonnage pour le suivi de la biodiversité sur les prairies semi-naturelles, adultes et masses d'œufs de Brun du pélargonium (*Cacyreus marshalli*) ont été découverts. Ce lyceanidae allochtone est lié à la présence de géraniums. Le prochain printemps sera mis en place un plan de surveillance et de sensibilisation de la population locale.

- Conservation des chauves-souris et pollution lumineuse : un monitoring a été mis en place pour mesurer les effets de la pollution lumineuse sur l'écologie des papillons et de certaines espèces de chauves-souris. Toutes les espèces surveillées ont détecté un avantage d'adaptation lié à la présence d'éclairage de barrages placés en haute altitude, ce qui crée une forte attraction pour dizaines d'espèces de papillons activement pillés par grandes populations de chauves-souris, placés à très haute altitude.

Concernant la flore, depuis 2014 le Parc réalise une action de contrôle des espèces envahissantes, en particulier *Senecio inaequidens*, *Reynoutria x bohemica*, *Budleja davidii*, qui sont présentes dans le territoire protégé, même si dans des domaines limités, presque toujours sur les limites. Cette action a abouti au cours du 2016 à des activités de maîtrise et arrachement des nouvelles stations. L'augmentation de nouvelles stations d'espèces exotiques est imputable à la hausse des températures par le changement climatique et à l'utilisation pour travaux de restauration de terres infestées par graines et / ou rhizomes, venants de dépôts localisés à altitudes plus basses. En particulier une intervention a été faite sur un peuplement de *Reynoutria x bohemica* introduit accidentellement à Degioz Valsavarenche dans un domicile privé ; on a utilisés des toiles de paillage qui seront laissées sur le lieu pour au moins 2-3 saisons végétatives. Ressources financières : voir recommandation 1 - Personnel: voir recommandation 2

**4. Frontières :** Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

#### **Parco nazionale Gran Paradiso**

Aucun changement aux frontières du site a été apporté depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Aucune difficulté a été rencontrée.

**5. Autres informations :** Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

*néant*

### **30. ITALY – MAREMMA REGIONAL PARK**

**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.

**To give importance to the points of view of the Scientific Council:** this condition was amply satisfied in 2011 too (year of renewal of the European Diploma), thanks to the Park Plan of 2008, made, overall following the recommendations by the Scientific Council. It represents a summary between the necessity to protect the biodiversity and the landscape of the area, and the necessity of a balanced socio-economic development.

In general the Scientific Council attends in every situation where the Park has to take action about the management of specific areas (forest management, wild fauna management, research plans, and actions against the coastal erosion). In all these cases it has been always possible to work together with full harmony, with the Scientific Council.



At the moment we have to nominate the new Scientific Council, with the wish to continue with the same type of approach and the same recommendations.

**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. Develop, in collaboration with the local authorities concerned, an approach to the management of the Ombrone by river basin, pursuant to the EU Water Framework Directive, with a view to attaining good ecological status for the watercourse within the meaning of that directive:** to verify the ecological condition of the Ombrone river final flow and the surrounding habitat, the Park wants to continue the monitoring about the granulometry of the soil, the water, the plant communities in the different habitats (the Pine wood, the dunes and the wetlands), the arthropod communities, the fish communities, the dynamism of *C. nodosa* and the birds communities. It's useful to have the essential knowledges to begin possible management actions by all the local in charge authorities. Now funding is finished but we are looking for other funding to continue the work. At the moment, about the monitoring, overall the geological type, the process to have regional funding is started and so we have the possibility to go on.

**2. Finalise, within a maximum of two years, the extension of the Park to include the marine environment under conditions to be decided in agreement with local players.**

- All studies on the sea protected area are included in the three-years plan of scientific research.
- All necessary studies to fill in the format of request for the Environment Ministry, have been taken.
- Meetings between the Park and the stakeholders, to discuss together the proposal of management of the sea protected area go on.

We are able to send all documents about the proposal to the Environment Ministry, but it doesn't want to go on with the project, at the moment.

**3. Designate the Trappola (Ombrona Delta) as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetland.**

The Trappola area has been included in the wetlands areas of Ramsar Convention. DM 304 21/10/2013.

**4. Considerably increase human resources in the Park responsible for field inspections and ensure a level of funding consistent with the increasing needs of optimum management of the diploma-holding area:**

No change about the level of funding and the increase of human resources

The number of visitors from the 1st January to the 31 October 2016 is about **41.330**.

This year we have opened the activity of Nordic Walking on some Park itineraries.

The UTPM (Trail Parco Maremma) has become a regular appointment every first weekend of October.

The itinerary A6 Fauna has been improved and it has become a thematic itinerary based on Parks legends.

**5. Step up technical support for local enterprises involved in developing integrated agro-environmental activities and promoting local products and services.**

- CETS: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Works in progress. The Park is registered in Europarc and an agreement with Federparchi Italia, to work together, has been done. We expect to deliver the candidacy in 2017.

- We constantly organise meetings with the local enterprises (BB, agritourism, restaurants, rent apartments etc.) to update them about the Park events, news and other.

- We have created the Park trademark about quality, after a series of meetings with the stakeholders. Next months the trademark will be active.

**6. Develop action to promote the protection and enhancement of the Park's anthropological heritage.** The exposition "Romani di Alberese" in the Park Visitor Centre had a big success, so it has been extended until 30 September 2016. The exposition showed the restored archeological finds of the "Scoglietto" and "Spolverino" sites. "Scoglietto" is close. About "Spolverino", we have three finished site areas and a new archeological area named Umbro Flumen, which has been located and started during the last summer 2014, is now active. On 13 August 2016 an archeological guided visit of Umbro Flumen with archeologists and a slowfood products tasting, has been organised.

**7. Prepare a plan for the management of the wolf population.** The wolf is come back to Maremma Park. Using scout cameras, the wolf-howling system and studying the tracks we have discovered that there's a group of wolves with adults and sub adults. So a research project named "Monitoring of wolf inside Maremma Park" has begun. The fecal materials has been taken to do the genetic investigation. They are true wolves.

**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.

1. The President has finished his office, but she has been confirmed for other 5 years, the Manager the same. A new Park Council has been named and a new Scientific Council is in progress to be named.
2. Finances: decrease of regional and local fundings.
3. In the Capalbio beach, inside the area of Park community a sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nested and probably eggs opened. The Maremma Park has taken part in the intervention.

**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 change.

**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.

1. The Park has organized for 2016 too, the event "Park's Festival" during two weekends of May. The festival represents an important tourist project about trekking and cultural events in different parks in Tuscany, to celebrate the institution of the first Park in Europe. In the Maremma Park it was possible to participate, free, to the Instawalk on the T2 "Le Cannelle" itinerary, to the local products open air market with folk concert and tasting and to canoe, trekking, chariot, bicycle excursions with tastings. The result has been a great success about the number of visitors.
2. Instawalk for instagramers of the town of Grosseto on 10 April 2016.
3. We have organised several guided Park area crossings during the tourist season.
4. The "sustainable mobility" project experimented during 2007 and repurposed in the summer 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 is an excellent managerial model aimed to encourage people to use free public transport rather than private cars. This project, combined with the cycle path from Alberese to Marina di Alberese and the automatic system of the parking area, represents a low environmental impact system of access to the beach and an innovative sustainable model of great importance for a protected area. For the last five summers the Park has done a big sacrifice, because there wasn't any financing from the Region; a symbolic price of 1,70 euro for the bus ticket, for all the day, has been asked to visitors.

This year we have a new: from November 2015 until March 2016 and from November 2016 we have changed the itineraries departure from "Pratini" to "Pinottolai" location, where there is a small parking. So the shuttle service is no more necessary. That is a way to economize and to better respect the environment.

5. The success about the reintroduction of osprey. This summer we had 1 juvenile.

6. We have opened a new thematic itinerary about the Park legends on the A6 Fauna itinerary. For the inauguration event we have organised the theatrical reading of legends along the itinerary with musical accompaniment.

7. We have hosted a Photograph Exhibition to the Alberese Visitor Centre named "Effetto Terra – Biodiversità" from June to September 2016.

8. We participated from 5 to 15 August 2016 to the "Festambiente" Festival in Enaoli with a stand where there was a photographic exhibition about the Park area and a video space with a series of Park documentaries.

9. The Park is inside the Tuscany net cetacean mammals and sea turtles observatory. The Park takes part to the Regional Go Green Mare Project and thanks to the Environment Minister authorization the Talamone sea turtle center is a Sea Turtles Rescue Center. This year we have taken care and leave free two sea turtles.

10. New Park video "Park to live" production and official presentation to the Talamone Aquarium.

11. We have donated the entire daily receipt of Sunday 28 August to the earthquake supports.

12. Inside the Legambiente Christmas package with local products, will be the Park video "Sguardi in ascolto". It's a good way to make promotion.

13. The new website is constantly update. Moreover we have reactivated the periodic newsletter.

14. Another new: we have created the possibility to buy the park ticket on line.

15. We have created a new Pinterest account and the social networks (Facebook, Tripadvisor, Youtube, and Instagram) are constantly update.

16. About the environmental education there is a new didactic project 2015/2016 with relative brochures, about various subjects: prehistory, how to feel the environment, Talamone Aquarium, Maremma Park in general, biodiversity, environment energies, Ombrone river, the sea, the beach and the dune ecological system. All oriented towards the infant, primary and secondary schools. There's an open didactic laboratory inside the Park.

During the summer the Park has organised didactic laboratories to the Talamone Aquarium with the Park rangers, the biologist and the veterinary. During the Spring to the Talamone Aquarium we have hosted a Photograph Exposition about the Park archeological sites.

17. For the second summer the Park has organised a volunteers camp to the Pinottolai guest house, to have a help to better protect the environment and the Principina a Mare and Marina di Alberese beaches. It was a success.

18. This year too, during the spring, the Park has organised the "horse riding meeting" in March 2016 and in October 2016: some days along the Park horseback itineraries. It has participated to the Verona Horses Fair in November 2016.

19. We have organised a seminary for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Osprey Project", a seminary about the scientific research results, a review course about environmental crimes and a review course for surveyors about the new public contracts code.

20. We continue the thematic Photograph Competition on line, named "Le stagioni nel Parco".

21. We are participating to the Campaign on Invasive Alien Species.

22. The project "Amici del Parco" about a way to do a constantly type of volunteering in the Park area has been begun and it will active as soon as possible.

23. Every year, in October, we organise the “Festa del Parco”. All walk itineraries are free for resident people.

24. To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the Ombrone flood we have organised, in collaboration with Consorzio di Bonifica 6 Toscana sud two guided excursions along the A7 Ombrone river itinerary.

### 31. ITALY – MONTECRISTO ISLAND NATURE RESERVE

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.

No conditions were attached to the renewal

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. in co-operation with the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, finalise and implement the Territorial Information System (TIS) for the planning of management initiatives; **All the informations about the reserve are stored in a Information System, used for the management activities.**

2. under the TIS, map the vegetation types present in the reserve, and in particular quantify the spread and distribution of *Ailanthus* populations on the island with a view to control measures; **The Ailanthus has been almost totally eradicated thanks to the Project LIFE 08/NAT/IT/000353 “Montecristo2010”. Monitoring activities are ongoing and will be carried on until 2019 at least, according to the After Life conservation program. More informations can be obtained visiting the project website [www.montecristo2010.it](http://www.montecristo2010.it) The Ailanthus map was the first step for a working plan for the invasive eradication, and was one of the LIFE project deliveries. During 2016 the effectiveness of ailanthus eradication has been carried out and the remaining sprouts or seedling have been eliminated, especially in the Lecci Valley. Such monitoring activities will be implemented at least until 2019. In addition according to the Life Project Resto Con LIFE 13/NAT/IT/000471 an eradication plan for other IAS has been drawn, see n. 8 below.**

3. limit the spread of *Ailanthus* as far as possible through selective systems and explore the possibility of eradicating it; **See above n. 2**

4. pursue efforts to regenerate the population of oak trees by monitoring and conducting regular checks on their development; **An action implemented in Life project mentioned above included the building of fences to preserve natural vegetation from goats. In these areas many holm oak seedlings have been planted. The acorn for seedlings production were collected from the old trees in Montecristo. Also a collection for ex situ conservation is maintained in the National Center for Biodiversity Conservation, together with other important species such as *Arbutus unedo*, *Myrtus communis*, *Fraxinus ornus*, *Dryopteris tyrrena*. Another ongoing LIFE project, LIFE13 nat/it/000471 RESTO CON LIFE, includes action for vegetation protection and creation of seed banks for Montecristo species provenances. During 2016 seeds have been collected and further plantations have been implemented in the fences, and the effectiveness of fencing has been verified. A large holm oak regeneration has been recorded in the fences, so that the only way to save oaks in Montecristo is to rescue them from the goat’s grazing, surely with fencing, and maybe by culling goats.**

5. maintain the island's goat population at its current level and take steps to protect the other components of the ecosystem which are under particular threat from the goat population; **Again in**

project LIFE Montecristo2010 special action for goat preservation were performed. The population census has been carried out in 2016 as well and the results shows that the wild goat population amount is quite stable

6. continue to apply the quota of 1 000 visitors a year recommended when the European Diploma was awarded and pursue the feasibility study on setting up a remote surveillance system; maintain arrangements for supervising groups of visitors; **The limit was met and a remote surveillance system was settled by the Coast Guard, for illegal income prevention. During 2015 a specific surveillance system has been settled, with three cameras and a communicating system sending images and videos to the local office and also to remote stations for the effectiveness of the control. Visitors are guided by Forest personnel and are not allowed to go in the tracks alone. A patrol of two forest officers has been on the island from April to November, preserving from illegal income and fishing. They are equipped with a boat so they can move along the coast. Further surveillance is granted by a larger boat of the national forest corps.**

7. pursue discussion and investigations with a view to replacing the diesel generator and using renewable energy sources on the island; **During 2016 a power generation system with photovoltaic panels has been installed. Even if the position and the orientation of the panels does not allow a complete autonomy, the production of energy with the diesel generator has been drastically reduced, especially during the summer months.**

8. gain more in-depth knowledge of the flora and fauna; **the above mentioned LIFE projects allowed to gain such knowledge. Also in 2016 exploitations have been carried out in order to quantify the spreading of invasive species such as *Oxalys pes-caprae* and *Lepidium didimum*. Other studies have been carried out about *Muscicapa striata* and its distribution as a consequence of rat eradication**

9. inform the secretariat of the progress made in securing approval of the reserve's management plan by the Tuscan regional authorities. **The National Park's Management Plan has been adopted in 2010.**

**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.

In spite of reducing in funding the management of the island has been performed in a quite satisfactory level

As already communicated in 2015, the National Forest Corps is going to be totally rearranged and united with other public entities (Carabinieri). The management activities will be hopefully carried out in the same level in the future, but there are some points to clear up, and one of these involves the availability of personnel for surveillance and maintenance.

**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 reported

**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.

The European Diploma's logo is exposed near the landing site of Montecristo Island Natural Reserve, so it can be seen by every visitor upon arrival.

In addition, near the little museum the flag delivered last May in Pisa San Rossore celebrating the 50 years of EDPA is presented.

Along the Island's paths, where visitors are conducted, several signs recalling the EDPA are placed.

In any official communication on Montecristo Natural Reserve the EDPA is mentioned as a value attribute to the reserve, highlighting the logo

### 32. ITALY - REGIONAL PARK OF MIGLIARINO, SAN ROSSORE AND MASSACIUCCOLI

**1. Conditions :** Lister ici toutes les conditions dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les conditions ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Le renouvellement n'indiquait pas des conditions.

**2. Recommendations :** Lister ici toutes les recommandations dont l'octroi ou le renouvellement du Diplôme européen a été assorti. Expliquer soit comment les recommandations ont été totalement mises en œuvre, soit les progrès dans leur mise en œuvre. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

1. *Veiller à ce que les nouvelles activités ou nouveaux développements ne portent pas préjudice au patrimoine naturel et paysager;*

Aucune modification.

2. *poursuivre les mesures de réduction des daims et des sangliers;*

Le rapport annuel 2015 indiquait une baisse des résultats à partir de la saison 2013/14, avec un écart sensible entre les prélèvements et les objectifs, et ceci surtout pour les daims.

La saison 2015/16, qui s'est achevée cet automne, a vu par contre un nombre important de sangliers et encore plus de daims abattus et capturés, avec des valeurs enfin en ligne avec ceux précédentes la saison 2013/14.

Comme expliqué dans le rapport 2015, le Parc s'est concentré davantage sur les abattements que sur les captures, ce qui a permis une sélection des animaux selon l'âge et le sexe suivant les objectifs annuels.

Les graphiques suivants montrent l'écart des trois dernières années entre les objectifs et les prélèvements des daims (fig. 1) et des sangliers (fig. 2) mais aussi la reprise des prélèvements de la dernière année.

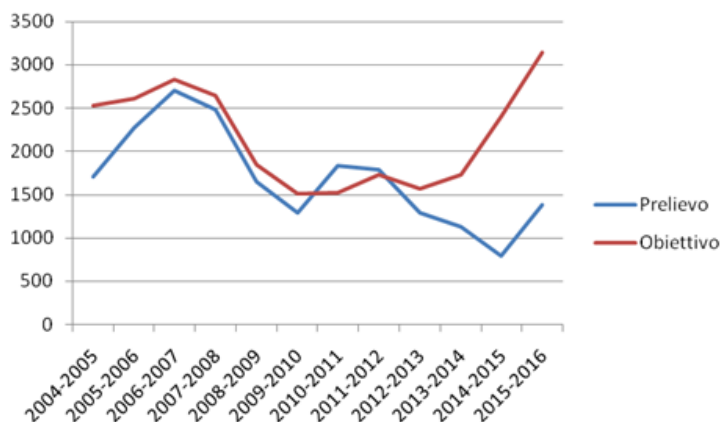


Fig. 1. confrontation entre les prélèvements (n. d'animaux abattus ou capturés) des **daims** et **sangliers** et les objectifs fixés

Un autre bon résultat est aussi le démarrage effectif, pendant ce mois de novembre 2016, des opérations de contrôle des daims et des sangliers dans la Base militaire plus grande (900 ha). L'autorité qui gère la Base militaire a confié le service de capture et de vente à une société externe spécialisée, selon le protocole technique du Parc. Un très bon résultat parce que dans cette base les derniers prélèvements remontaient à la saison 2012/13. Le personnel du Parc peut désormais concentrer son effort dans les autres zones.

L'effort devrait en effet continuer sur les bons résultats de la saison dernière 2015/16 et augmenter davantage jusqu'à toucher la croissance démographique des populations.

*3. prendre en compte la conservation de la nature dans la gestion de l'eau, en particulier dans la mise en œuvre des mesures hydrologiques;*

Aucune modification.

*4. inclure plus activement les valeurs naturelles dans la gestion des zones situées hors des réserves naturelles, notamment dans les zones forestières et agricoles*

Sylviculture : les valeurs naturelles sont pris en compte par l'application, pendant les coupes, de mesures qui respectent la période de nidification de la faune et le sol (litière et micro morphologie des dunes) ; le paysage aussi est davantage pris en compte par une évaluation de l'effet visuel des coupes dans le court, le moyen et le long terme.

Agriculture : aucune modification.

*5. Accélérer la mise en œuvre des mesures destinées à limiter les impacts négatifs sur le Lac de Massaciuccoli, en particulier la pollution d'origine agricole et poursuivre l'amélioration de la qualité des eaux du lac ;*

Aucune modification : les projets et bonnes pratiques des années dernières continuent.

*6. poursuivre et consolider les mesures destinées à mieux protéger les dunes côtières et en faire connaître la valeur ;*

Aucune modification : les bonnes pratiques de gestion des dunes côtières, notamment de nettoyage continuent. Continue aussi l'inversion de tendance par rapport aux effets de désertification dus au piétinement. Cette année 2016 les guides et les bénévoles du Parc ont été formés sur cet aspect et ont participé aux activités de nettoyage des dunes (avec les touristes et les écoles), de connaissance et de protection absolue du *Charadrius alexandrinus* pendant la nidification qui coïncide en bonne partie avec la saison balnéaire !).



*7. Poursuivre la lutte contre les espèces exotiques envahissantes;*

Aucune modification concernant *Yucca gloriosa* et *Amorpha fruticosa*. La lutte contre *Ailanthus altissima* a subi un ralentissement suite à la décision de ne plus utiliser le désherbant habituel à base de Glyphosate, dont l'usage extra-agricole a été interdit par la Région Toscane. L'acide acétique (concentration 26%) utilisé l'année dernière n'a pas été aussi efficace. En 2016 on a donc coupé des arbres proches à la maturité sexuelle de manière à empêcher au moins la reproduction gamique.

8. *saisir toutes les opportunités d'améliorer les possibilités de passage pour la faune sous les routes et voies ferrées;*

Aucune modification : on suit l'efficacité des passages récemment aménagés.

9. *limiter les émissions sonores dans les zones vouées à la détente*

La répression des émissions dans la zone plus critique de « Marina di Torre del Lago » s'est poursuivie, en constante coordination avec le Procureur de Lucca.

10. *Achever la relocalisation des activités artisanales aux abords du lac de Massaciucoli.*

Aucune modification.

**3. Gestion du site :** Lister ici toute modification dans la gestion du site détenant le Diplôme européen, en ce qui concerne les environnements terrestre et aquatique (si applicable), et en ce qui concerne les agents et les ressources financières, depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Depuis mars 2016 le Parc fait partie d'un territoire plus vaste : la nouvelle Réserve de Biosphère « Selve costiere di Toscana » a été enfin reconnue à l'intérieur du programme MAB de l'UNESCO. Ceci dans l'intention de donner au Parc un rôle guide dans une gestion du territoire vaste (les « Monti Pisani » au nord-est, les collines de Livorno au sud) qui intègre préservation de l'environnement, activités humaines (et développement) et recherche scientifique, avec un modèle de gouvernance qui valorise la participation active de toutes les parties prenantes dès les premières phases de rédaction d'un programme de gestion.

Suite à la baisse des soutiens financiers publics, le Parc continue à développer les occasions d'auto financement, notamment par une forte promotion du tourisme durable. Les décisions prises cette année (ouverture au public du Domaine de San Rossore, guides reconnues par le parc avec formation continue, promotion des centres visiteurs, signalisation d'itinéraires pédestres) sont fortes mais n'arrivent pas à compenser les besoins économiques du Parc qui devrait pouvoir fonctionner et investir.

**4. Frontières :** Détailler tout changement apporté aux frontières du site détenant le Diplôme européen depuis l'envoi du dernier rapport annuel au Conseil de l'Europe. S'il y a des changements, veuillez joindre une carte appropriée à ce rapport. Veuillez également indiquer toute difficulté, non encore résolue, que vous avez pu rencontrer.

Aucun changement.

**5. Autres informations :** Lister ici toute autre information, concernant le site détenant le Diplôme européen, que vous estimez nécessaire de fournir au Conseil de l'Europe.

Depuis le 4 septembre 2016 le Directeur qui avait pris service en 2013 a terminé sa tâche, suite au changement de Président. Est en cours une sélection publique d'un nouveau Directeur. A cause de cette situation et de problèmes économiques le Parc traverse une période très difficile: de plus, la partie en retraite de 2 employés (2 autres prévus en 2017) sans remplacement va aggraver la situation.

### 33. ITALY – SASSO FRATINO INTEGRAL NATURE RESERVE

**6. 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.

**No condition where attached to the renewal**

**7. 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.

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 1 .** Implement the management plan for the Casentino Forests National Park and reinforce co-operation with the national park in order to co-ordinate all the activities, especially in terms of research. **Cooperation and collaboration with the Park in research activities in the RNI and adjacent RRNNBB, is getting on. Particularly this year, together with the Park and Viterbo Tuscia University, thanks to the National Park of Abruzzo , Lazio and Molise, the nomination to insert the reserve in the World Heritage site "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany" was submitted to the UNESCO 2016. Inspection visit by IUCN took place in October.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 2.** The nature reserve should continue to stand out as the reference for nature protection in the region. **The Pratovecchio UTB has maintained and expanded its relationships with Universities and research institutes to the multidisciplinary study on the Reserve. Through conferences and articles in the press and television the characteristics and significance of the Integral Reserve have been disclosed at regional and national level.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 3.** Care should be taken to ensure that the Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve and the adjacent biogenetic reserves continue to be managed as a cohesive whole. **The Sasso Fratino Reserve and surrounding biogenetic reserves, are managed by the Office of Pratovecchio that pays particular attention to their integrated management. In particular, it aims to limit or remove at all interventions even on the bands of the Biogenetic Reserves bordering Sasso Fratino in order to create a buffer zone.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 4.** Special attention should continue to be given to protecting Monte Falco in order to avoid, in particular, the construction of any new ski slopes. **Actions amend to change the condition of the places or construction of new ski slopes are not expected.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 5.** The necessary funding should be provided in order to maintain the very high standard of scientific research;. **The Pratovecchio UTB has activated also for the current year, the necessary resources for research developing in the RNI and adjacent Casentino Natural Reserves.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 6.** Any further damage in the buffer zone, such as the laying of new roads or significant improvement work on the ski slopes, should be avoided. **No project to expand the existing sky slopes is expected in the next future. The project for the re-naturalization of the former ski resort site in Gabrendo mountain, situated in the Biogenetic Natural Reserve of Campigna, ended. No other changes in the status of sites in the Reserve adjacent to Sasso Fratino RNI were detected.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 7.** The number of visits should not be increased and they should be restricted to researchers and people with a genuine interest in the site. **Visits in the Integral Reserve are restricted and authorized only for reasons closely linked to research and University training aiming to ecosystems conservation.**

**CM/ResDip(2010)12-Recommendation 8.** The possibility of extending the European Diploma to include the biogenetic reserves should be studied. **The opportunity of extending the European Diploma to the biogenetic reserves adjacentes to Sasso Fratino is under study.**

**8. 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 change in management is expected, however, according to LEGISLATIVE DECREE 19 August 2016, n. 177 "Measures for the rationalization of police duties and inclusion of the State Forestry Corps, in accordance with Article 8, paragraph 1, letter a) of the Law 7 August 2015, n. 124, on the reorganization of public administration ", since January the first 2017, CFS duties and functions will be assumed by the Arma of Carabinieri.**

**9. 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 reported**

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

#### **1) Biodiversity conservation and protection activities**

the following researches are currently underway:

- LIFE14 NAT / IT / 000759 "WetFlyAmphibia"- Aimed in improving the conservation status of five population of species included in Amphibians Community interest (*Bombina variegata* declining at national level, *Salamandrina terdigitata* and *Triturus carnifex*) butterflies (*Euplagia quadripunctaria* \*, priority species, *Eriogaster catax*) and their habitats, and also the habitat of Community interest 6430 (Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels) within the Natura 2000 sites included in the Casentino biogenetic National Reserves and National Forest Park. <http://www.lifewetflyamphibia.eu/it/>

- Project Sabiod - Scaled Acoustic Biodiversity - Study of the soundscape in areas with different levels of protection and anthropization -University of Pavia - Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences - Interdisciplinary Centre for bioacoustics and environmental research in collaboration with 'University of Toulon - LSIS.

- LIFE11 / NAT / IT / 000525 "Monitoring of insects with public partecipations" - Some monitoring areas were included in the RNI and in the adjacent Lama forest of Badia Prataglia RNB - Lama.

Ended researches:

- Dendroecological study on gap disturbance renewal in Sasso Fratino RNI - The study aims to analyze the processes which lead to the affirmation of young beech communities generated as result of natural disturbance processes along a large altitudinal gradient. A cycle structure model of Sasso Fratino beech forests will be realized and, alongside the studies on longevity, will be delineated the renewal processes and its affirmation in relation to the altitudinal zone and to climatic changes. The understanding of natural processes can provide useful information for a low impact silviculture tending to reproduce natural processes. - University of Tuscia - DAFNE Professor Piovesan

- Preliminary analysis on status of “Rufa” group ants population artificially introduced and their ecological impact in Appennino - Preliminary analysis on the actual status of the Group "Rufa" ants populations, introduced over 50 years ago in the Casentinesi Natural Reserves as biological control for the defense of forest phytosanitary condition, for an evaluation on the ecological environmental changes occurred in natural setting and the eventually species colonization of Sasso Fratino RNI. University of Florence - Department of Biology in collaboration with the Pratovecchio UTB staff.

## 2) Didactics, popularization and promotion

- Legambiente – Initiative of popularization and promotion “Wolf and Wild Cat in the Casentino Forests: to educate the preservation of biodiversity through awareness of predators and their habitats” - Riserve Naturali Statali Casentinesi 25/26 febbraio 2016

- Workshop “Bioacoustics and Ecoacoustics for Environmental Acoustics Monitoring - University of Pavia - CIBRA (Interdisciplinary Center for Bioacoustics and Environmental Research) <http://www-3.unipv.it/cibra/> ; Nationale Park of Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna.

- Workshop “Aphylophorales and Biodiversity” – Riserve Naturali Casentinesi 28 settembre – 3 ottobre 2016

- X Congress of Italian Mammals Society – Poster “The European Wildcat (*Felis silvestris* silvestris) in the Biogenetic Casentinesi Natural Reserves, Northern Apennines

- Appalachian State University – North Carolina (USA) . Educational and scientific study visits

- Student Unions of Forestry and Faunal Science – University of Florence

- Bologna University

- Viterbo Tuscia University

- CAI – “Central Scientific Committee” of Club Alpino Italiano (Italian Alpine Club)

## 34. NETHERLANDS – BOSCHPLAAT NATURE RESERVE

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.

The renewal of the diploma is not subject to any conditions.

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. sufficient financial resources need to be available on an ongoing basis in order to safeguard the interests of the Boschplaat’s natural environment, especially monitoring, staff, public relations and communication;

2. measures should be taken to restore the original dynamics in the eastern part of the reserve. The present function of the “Stuifdijk” (artificial sand dike) should be taken into consideration. New insights based on recent scientific research on restoring natural dynamics should be included in the management plan, including the consequences of the current rise in sea levels;

3. communication with all those involved in the measures to be taken (which are still being contested locally) requires maximum attention and the deployment of the necessary resources;

4. annual shipping incidents in the North Sea to the north of the Boschplaat are a real concern for both people and the natural environment. Better guarantees of safety with regard to the transport of hazardous substances and oil should be instituted;
5. the number of motorised vehicles on the beach should be reduced.

Recommendation 1. A group of islanders were trained for the position of assistant warden in 2015/2016. Part of their training focussed specifically on the Boschplaat. This training generated a pool of 10 qualified local workers who could be deployed as needed for monitoring and supervising and for engaging in activities involving informing the public about the Boschplaat. This work pool will also be available for deployment in 2017.

Recommendation 2. The widespread dynamic processes occurring in the northwestern part of the reserve are continuing as extensively as before. This had made the access path through the shifting sands impassable. During the autumn of 2016, a new path, about one kilometre in length, was created to the south of the original path, and the access through the dunes to the beach was shifted by a combined length of around 1500 metres. Changes were also made to the bicycle parking facility. These renovations have ensured access for both visitors and site managers and are allowing the dynamic processes to continue unhindered.

No progress has been recorded regarding an increase in dune dynamics for the eastern part of the Stuidijk starting at Pole 20.

Recommendation 3. Coping with the results of sea level rise due to climate change and halting the decrease in characteristic vegetation will probably require radical management interventions during the upcoming management plan period. In the knowledge that achieving this requires widespread support from both government authorities and the local population, certain activities were carried out last year.

With input from local residents, theatre group Peer Group realised a project called 'Living Dunes: A Listening Walk through the Living Dune Landscape of Terschelling'. Around 900 people participated in this walk aimed at generating a personal experience and an awareness of this dynamic coastal dune landscape and its meaning for flora, fauna, the landscape and safety.

Municipal authorities were taken on a working visit to this area during which the results of sea level rise were addressed and the participants were asked to contribute their ideas toward possible solutions.

Staatsbosbeheer and Rijkswaterstaat provided the local cultural-historical society with a lecture entitled 'The Past, Present and Future of the Boschplaat' during which the general public was made aware of these issues.

As a consequence of these activities, an extensive communication and public participation project is being planned for 2017 that will include input generated by scientific research and the knowledge and expertise of the local population and the site managers. This project will also address the Boschplaat Nature Reserve's international aspects including its prestigious holding of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

'The Real Terschelling' is an entirely new communication and participation programme. At the heart of this brand new programme is an internet forum currently being participated in by around 900 people, about half of whom are islanders and half of whom are tourists. Every month, these participants are sent a survey about current and future management and facilities issues. This medium provides a two-way exchange of information: the site managers provide the participants with information, and the participants provide the site managers with information and ideas.

One of these surveys addressed the subject of dynamic dunes. The findings showed an increasing appreciation (> 70% in favour) of this dynamism. They also demonstrated a need for more information about this method of dune management.

Recommendation 4. Please refer to the 2015 report.

Recommendation 5. One of the subjects addressed by the internet forum was the use of motorised vehicles in nature reserves. This led to an even more cautious policy for issuing these permits, particularly with regard to the Boschplaat. Internally, critical attention was again devoted to the use of cars by the reserve's own employees.

The number of permits issued by the local authorities for driving on the beach remained unchanged.

**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 relevant 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.

On the Grië, an important old agricultural landscape with high value for nature conservation, full property rights for 24 hectares of land were acquired in 2016 as a result of land exchange elsewhere on the island. A crucial part of this acquisition involves practically contiguous parcels of land located farthest to the east which include a duck decoy that is still in operation and was situated inside the reserve as a private enclave. This purchase means an improved regulation of quiet conditions and the prevention of various undesirable developments in this part of the reserve. This can also improve the management of natural and cultural-historical values.

**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.

Natura 2000 management plans. The viewpoints submitted for the draft version of the management plan were also addressed during the course of 2016. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is expected to establish the management plan officially before the end of 2016.

### 35. NETHERLANDS - DE OOSTVAARDERSPLASSEN NATURE RESERVE

**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.

Any developments of Lelystad regional airport must not have any negative impact on the reserve; this is to be confirmed after the full procedure of EIA including public consultation has been finalized; in particular:

1. All alternative locations with least disturbing effects on the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve and its surroundings.
2. All flight routes and heights and their risks of disturbing the fauna making use of the reserve and its surroundings and the risk of birds with airplanes.

Last year the flying-routes have been established respecting the Natura 2000 requirements. That means that airplanes fly only at high altitudes over the Oostvaardersplassen and that the upward and downward movements occur outside the nature reserve.

**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.

Recommendations to the renewal:

- A. The annual reports have to include a specific paragraph on all developments in relation with Lelystad regional airport.
  - B. Further convince authorities of the surrounding municipalities and the Province to decrease external impacts on the reserve by reviewing urbanization and zoning plans where appropriate
  - C. Ensure the optimal functioning of two visitor centres (Almere and Lelystad) by increasing budgets for personel, including communication experts
  - D. Complete the further integration of adjacent green areas such as Hollandse Hout into the reserve management; give priority to rebuilding the railroad along a new trace to the South of this zone with establishment of a new railway station Lelystad-Zuid
  - E. Further minimize the visual urbanization impact of Almere aiming a better gradual integration between the city and the open landscape by fully respecting the border and buffer zones of the reserve and by still further lowering the agree building heights and volumes
  - F. Implement the recommendations of the ICMO report related to the reserve management and the further extension of the reserve with a corridor to Horsterwold; concentrate all efforts to establish the Oostvaarderswold as a multifunctional corridor with combined importance for conservation, recreation, and water management; review the existing windfarms along the future Oostvaarderswold corridor to reduce risks of bird collisions and maximize “wilderness” aspect; avoid new developments, infrastructures and investments in the future corridor zones other than those related to its specific ecological functions; maximize future ecological connecting potentials by constructing ecoducts and tunnels where needed.
- A. Around Lelystad airport developments are in full swing. An exit from the Larserweg is laid out towards the airport. Staatsbosbeheer is involved in the construction of the exit and delivers sand for the construction of the road.
  - B. The contacts with the Municipalities of Lelystad and Almere, and the province of Flevoland have been intensified thanks to the common aspiration that the OVP should be a part of a new National Park “Nieuwland”. This means that the boundaries of the Oostvaardersplassen shift towards the urban areas, creating a buffer zone around the central part of the OVP. There will come "ports" to Lelystad and Almere-city to optimize the accessibility of the area. In the edge zones possibilities for leisure are created, with which the recreational pressure to the central part of the OVP can be limited.
  - C. No changes from last year. Administration and management of the Visiting centers are unchanged.
  - D. The management plan for the “Hollandse Hout” was established. The introduction of red deer in the Hollandse Hout is possible next year. This year a start has been made with the construction of a rift in the Hollandse Hout to increase the attractiveness and variety of vegetation types in the forest area. The further integration of the Kotterbos and Oostvaardersbos as components of the OVP is currently underway. These areas (like the Hollandse hout) wil become a gateway for the future National Park. The railway line between Almere and Lelystad this year has been voted in a public election as the most beautiful railway route from the Netherlands.

- E. See also D. In the previous annual report the initiated changes and developments are described for the edge zones. This year the plans are further developed and a start has been made in Hollandse Hout with the construction of ponds, where sand and clay is extracted. From viewpoint of the port idea to Lelystad and Almere plans have been developed for a natural buffer between the cities and the heartland of the OVP. Visitors in the border areas should be able to experience the Oostvaardersplassen nature. Next year we expect to book the first results in the context of this development.
- F. The Natura 2000 management plan for the OVP has been established this year and is leading the management and development measures in the central part and the edge zones. On 26th of October, the Provincial Council approved the transfer of responsibility for the "wellbeing of large herbivores" from the national to the provincial government. We are now working on a description of what this change in responsibility means for the provincial government. Early next year, it becomes clear what this policy and review on this policy will become.

**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

This year, the Natura 2000 management plan is adopted. Next years the implementation of the management measures will follow. For the OVP, the key tasks are:

- Sufficient moulting areas and resting areas for waterfowl
- Restoration of large areas / zones broad reed beds, including water reed, by restoring natural level dynamics and preventing dehydration for reed birds
- Pee-breed situations for wigeon and breeding birds

For a summary of the tasks and objectives and the full management, see the following link:

<http://www.synbiosys.alterra.nl/natura2000/documenten/gebieden/078/beheerplan/ontwerp%20natura%202000-beheerplan%20oostvaardersplassen.pdf>

Visitor numbers at the Outdoor Center are growing. We received about 130,000 visitors in this center. This puts pressure on the center and the parking places around the area (Almere and Kitsweg). The number of parking spaces at the visiting center at the Kitsweg has been increased from 40 to 200, but this number seems to be not enough in busy weekends. The Oostvaardersveld has been discovered by the visitor. This area is open and visitors can come face to face with a herd of Konik horses. In 2014, there is a tunnel made under the railway to open up the area for large grazers. This exchange is only sporadically used by the animals. Last year a number of deer visited the new area, but have returned to the central part.

For the edge zones Hollandse Hout, Oostvaardersveld, Kotterbos and Oostvaardersbos forest management plans are or will be written. This management plans should be an integral part of the plan for the border zones and Oostvaardersplassen as a whole. This recreational forest areas are connected with the central part and should provide shelter to the large herbivores.

In October of this year an intention agreement between the Province of Flevoland and Staatsbosbeheer has been made for the development of an area between the Trekweg and A6. The objective is to create a kind of a showcase along the A6 for experiencing the Oostvaardersplassen-feeling. It is designed as a permanent foraging-area for harrier and accessible for recreation.

**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

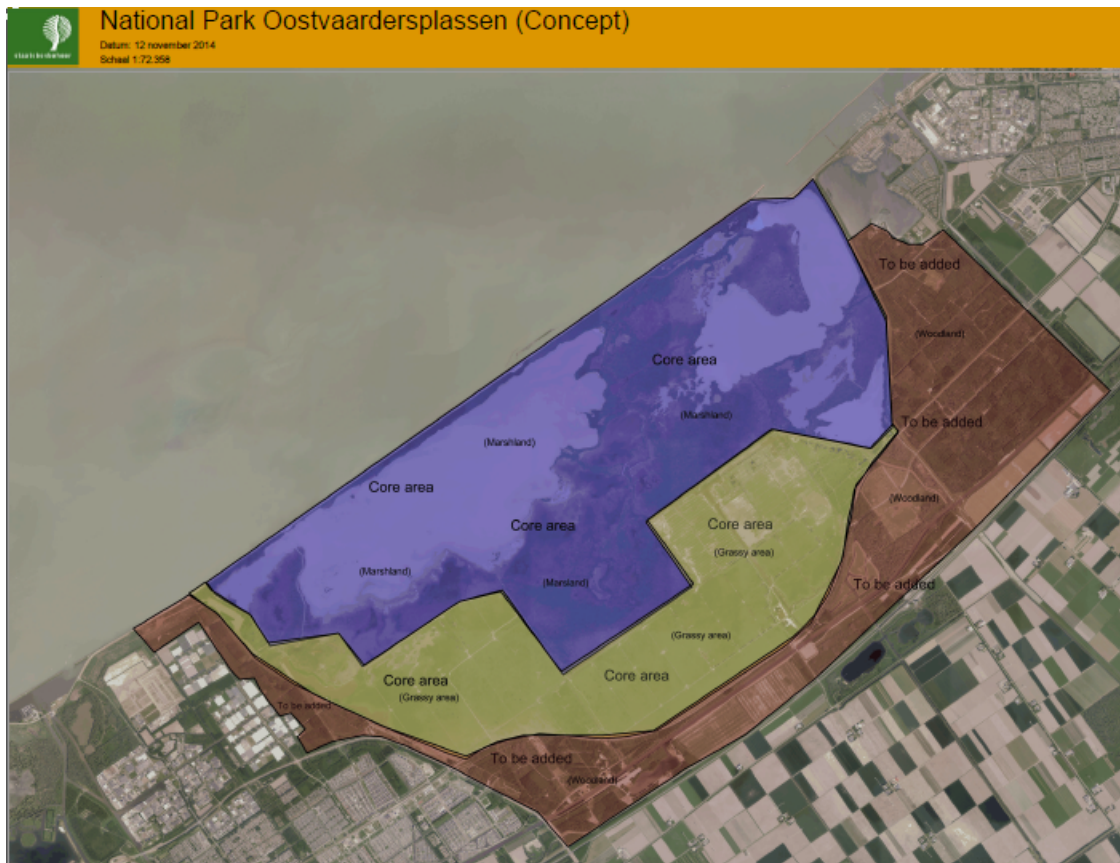
attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been no real boundary changes last year. The process of integrating the edge zones and the core of the OVP becomes more and more visible. See also the comments made in the report for 2015.

Because of the formation of a National Park, where the OVP is part of a larger unit with the Marker lake, Marker Wadden and Lepelaarsplassen, some discussions and developments will be part of the agenda. The main tasks for the OVP are:

- Preservation of identity, including cooperation with other land management organizations? How can areas reinforce each other.
- How to deal with an expected increase of (foreign) visitors? Issues such as zoning in the edge zones..
- How to shape scientific research and education?

Important is to indicate that the Marker Wadden and Marker lake the coming years are in development and that the focus for the visitor will remain in the Oostvaardersplassen



The concept National Park Oostvaardersplassen.

**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.

Like any other year there has been a new annual report made about the management of last year.

This can be found on the website, in the dossier Oostvaardersplassen at:



<https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/~media/08-dossiers/oostvaardersplassen/2015-2016-jaarrapportage-monitoring-oostvaardersplassen.pdf?la=nl-nl>

Here one can find the latest development about the large herbivores and bird life in the Oostvaardersplassen. This annual report is made available to the public through the website of Staatsbosbeheer.

In November of this year's participation in the project Migratory Birds for People has resumed. the thread has picked up again to connect the visitor centers in Europe with each other by the flight paths of migratory birds.

Participation in the Life project application, which aims to remove barriers through communication for migratory birds, is still considered.

The task for the Oostvaardersplassen for the coming years will be to develop the Natura 2000 management plan and its effects on the target species (31 species). Point 3 indicates already what "challenges" we see. One of the main challenges will be to connect the swamp part with the dry, grassy, lower part of the core area. There will be more space given to scientific research on these interventions and their effects. (Inter) national universities and high schools are invited to contribute.

In 2016 the development of the Oostvaardersplassen as part of a larger National Park, with the Lepelaarplassen, Marker Wadden and Markermeer has given a clear direction. There has been made a joint bid book (with Natuurmonumenten, Flevolandschap, City of Almere, Lelystad City and the Province of Flevoland) for the nomination of a world class National Park. In this public election National Park Nieuwland did not get a price. The partners agreed to continue the process to found a National Park. Next year, the plans will be developed further and we will, especially in the border areas see the first results of these developments in recreational facilities, educational programs and the elaboration of the 'land ports.

The white tailed eagles are doing well. Last October there were at the same time six birds observed in the area. 2016 is known as the 10th year of consecutive breeding success.

### **36. NETHERLANDS – DE WEERRIBEN-DE WIEDEN NATURE RESERVE**

**1. Conditions:** List here all conditions that 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. Urge the responsible authorities to adopt the joint Natura 2000 management plan, by the end of 2016, as an official and binding document that will be considered as covering the requirements of the European Diploma;

The Province of Overijssel is responsible for drawing up the N2000 Management Plan. Unfortunately, the plan has not yet been completed. At the moment, the plan is available for inspection and will be adopted in the spring of 2017.

Attached is a letter from the Province outlining the reason for the delay. Preparations for the implementation of the measures will nevertheless continue. The implementation of the PAS (Process-based Nitrogen Approach) in the field will start by the end of 2017.

**2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations that 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. Implement a monitoring programme to evaluate the effects – at least on important and/or endangered species – of the new connection between the Weerribben and the Wieden, the construction of which was finished at the end of 2014, considering the exemplary role of the project;

Unfortunately, monitoring was skipped this year. In 2015, it was the Province that carried out the monitoring programme. This showed that the nature bridge was being used by many different animals, among which otter and deer. In 2017, the monitoring will be jointly carried out by Staatsbosbeheer and Natuurmonumenten. Working together with volunteers, data is collected with the aid of camera traps and walk-in traps.

2. Monitor the further development of fish stocks, with the emphasis on eels, to strengthen the ecological function of the reserves and natural reproduction in line with Natura 2000 requirements;

In 2017, Natuurmonumenten will extend the fishing contracts in the Wieden provided that conditions regarding sustainability are met. If not, they will be terminated. In the Weerribben, the annual pike study group will carry out the annual pike monitoring. During the winter season, throughout the Weerribben, pike are caught with a rod, measured, weighed and released again. The state of the pike is currently very good.

3. *Limit the impact of fishing by defining a maximum number of licenses or limiting the catch; define methods for avoiding secondary catches of otter or other species; ensure the further development of a management plan for fish stocks covering all species, as requested in the previous resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma;*

Angling in the Wieden is possible but on a very small scale. There are still only 3 fishing companies active in the Wieden and that will be reduced even further in the future. See answer to question 2.

There are no longer professional fishermen active in the Weerribben, although there is some angling in restricted places.

4. *Carefully observe the development of boating on the Kalenberger Gracht and set limits (for example a maximum number and/or size of boats) or provide for measures in the event of increasing numbers of larger boats;*

There is no increase in large boats.

Unfortunately, no new monitoring system is yet available. The Municipality first wants to complete the planning and the new organisational format of the National Park.

5. *Continue with the designation of adjoining areas as extensions of, or buffer zones to the protected areas, especially to the north (Rottige Meente) and south-east (Staphorster Veld), and create a connection between the two separate parts of the Wieden Nature Reserve between the Zuideindiger Wiede and the Bovenwiede;*

The construction of the buffer zones depends on the adoption of the N2000 Management Plan. The Management Plan is expected to be adopted in January 2017, after which the preparations for the buffer zones will commence. The NPWW (Weerribben-Wieden National Park) core team has recommended that the National Park be viewed in a broader context in connection with its surroundings. The main emphasis here should be on the balance between ecology and economy. The economic spin-off of the National Park is expected to work for a larger area and to decrease the pressure on well-known hotspots.

6. *Review contracts with business owners and landowners with regard to habitat management, and especially the duration of these contracts, to ensure that management can be directed by the responsible authorities and to prevent long-term and irredeemable contracts whereby the reserve authorities have limited leverage;*

In 2016, agreement was reached with the reed sector and the Province of Overijssel on changes in the Provincial Nature and Landscape subsidy (SNL). With the new subsidy scheme, the threatening problem of VAT levying for reed growers was averted. Staatsbosbeheer supervises the management which is carried out by the tenants. The Province pays 80% of the management fee directly to the reedland tenants.

7. *Observe possible threats that may occur due to the intensification of agriculture, changes in water management or construction of wind farms;*

No changes

8. *Secure adequate funds to convert the Ossenzijl information centre, at least in part, into an educational centre geared towards young people.*

The Visitors' Centre in Ossenzijl (Staatsbosbeheer) had more educational programmes available for young people. The Nature-theme afternoons, the IVN (Nature Volunteer Organisation) table and the Gnome trail are very successful. The educational programme will be expanded in the coming years. The nature trail will be renovated in 2017.

**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.*

Natuurmonumenten has been restructured in the past year whereby the regional layer has been removed. Natuurmonumenten now has two layers, a Head Office and 25 Management Units (MU). In the Wieden Management Unit, the workforce has remained the same, the job descriptions have sometimes been slightly changed, which means that there are no big local changes. In 2017, a new SNL subsidy period will start for the Wieden. In order to qualify for this subsidy all criteria need to be reconsidered and newly evaluated. The Nature and Landscape subsidy (SNL) period for the Weerribben runs until 2019.

The State and the Province of Overijssel have delegated the tasks relating to the National Parks to the municipality of Steenwijkerland. A core team in which the various interested parties and the organisations responsible for the management of the Parks are represented, is considering the position of the New-Style National Park. *By the end of 2016, the core team will present recommendations to the Municipal Council of Steenwijkerland. Formally, the core team will stop at the end of 2016, but considering the magnitude of the task, the activity of forming a new WWNP will continue in a different way in 2017.*

**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.*

The Wieden nature vision has almost been completed. The nature vision will be ready by the end of this year and will then be shared with residents, businesses and holidaymakers.

Meanwhile, a start has been made with putting our management data into the new management system (CMSi software); this will be continued in the coming years.

Natuurmonumenten and Staatsbosbeheer have all their data in CMSi, and we are currently working out our nature management in combination with the QGIS Geographic Information System (GIS) programme.

*Visitors – Information policy:*

The information panels in the Weerribben have been partly renewed using new designs and modern explanations. At the beginning of 2017, all the information panels in the field will have been renewed and will now also have **information about the European Diploma**.

This year, 3 beautiful books were published. ‘The RIETboek’ (the REED book), a book about reed and reed cutters in the Weerribben. ‘Hollandse licht’ (‘Dutch light’), a book with landscape photographs and this autumn the book ‘Vogels van Nationaal Park Weerribben Wieden’ (Birds of the Weerribben Wieden National Park). This book describes the avifauna and provides the visitor with a great deal of information about characteristic breeding birds, the important biotopes and winter birds. The book was written by wardens Ronald Messemaker (Natuurmonumenten, Jeroen Bredenbeek (Staatsbosbeheer) and Obe Brandsma (volunteer meadow bird researcher).

The Weerribben-Wieden National Park, together with 12 other nature reserves, was nominated this year by the Ministry of Economic Affairs as one of the finest nature reserves in the Netherlands.

This resulted in a lot of national media attention.

*Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, incidental or permanent, actual or anticipated:*

In March 2016, the complete LIFE for Dutch Fens project came to an end. Currently, 18.3 ha of land has been deforested for vegetation mats. In August, haymaking took place on both locations; from now on, this will be an annual process. The open spaces with water will close up further due to the light ingress and, by mowing this whenever possible, peat moss reed marshes may form, and perhaps also floating fen vegetation.

*Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes:*

The aerial survey for flora was completed last year. The plants species for the entire Wieden have been identified and listed (inventory). All the data has been entered into CMSi; this data is for evaluation purposes for the Nature and Landscape subsidy (SBK) and will be handed over to the Province. A comparison of species with the previous survey is currently being carried out (insofar as this is possible) and will be completed in 2017.

An aerial survey for flora for the SNL was also carried out in the Weerribben. This concerns a set of characteristic plants for the various management types and Red List species, in total approximately 150 species. It is not easy to make a comparison with other surveys, as this is the first time that the inventory has taken place according to the SNL method.

*Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds:*

**Mammals**

The otter population is doing very well in the Weerribben and the Wieden. In 2016, an Alterra report was published (Otter results Netherlands 2015-2016) giving the number of otters (172) in the Netherlands. One third of the otter population is found in the restocking areas with 32 in the Wieden, 26 in the Weerribben and 8 in the Rottige Meenthe.

One of the otters found in the Weerribben appeared to be 11 years old. An inventory of small mammals in the Weerribben made clear that there is a growing population of Eurasian Water Shrew, a Red List species.

#### Birds

Many Kingfishers were spotted this year with around >16 pairs breeding in the Wieden.

This year, 2016, 19 breeding pairs of Great Bitterns, 12 pairs of Marsh Harriers, 109 pairs of Purple Herons, and 132 pairs of Black Terns bred here, 2 pairs of which on natural material. There was an increase in the number of Black Terns this year, this is an opportunistic species. The Weerribben: the new marshes in Wetering Oost and West are still developing into bird-rich marshes. In 2015, there were 6 pairs of Great Bitterns, 2 pairs of Marsh Harriers, 2 pairs of Common Terns, 2 pairs of Little Crakes and 1 of Baillon's Crakes . Newcomers included a colony of 5 pairs of Purple Herons. There were many foraging Purple Herons and Spoonbills observed in the Wieden. Other special species observed in the new marshes were Glossy Ibis, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Little Gull, Red-necked Grebe, Little Tern, White-winged Tern and Whiskered Tern. The number of sightings of Osprey and White tailed Eagle are increasing, it maybe the start of a breeding attempt

#### Dragonflies

An inventory was carried out in the Wieden. Started in 2013, this inventory now includes the whole Wieden area. An extraordinary sight is the dozens of Silver Moon (*Boloria selene*) that are often seen in June. The Dainty White-faced Darter was also increasingly observed at more locations in 2016. The Spotted darter was seen this year for the first time in the Wieden, and the Large White-faced Darter is seen everywhere in wind-free locations.

In the Weerribben, a two-year inventory of dragonflies, grasshoppers, and butterflies was carried out, ending in 2016. Here are some results; the Spotted Darter is still doing very well; there is a large population of some hundred Spotted Darters in the central section of the Weerribben and many new populations have been found all-over the area. The Dainty White-faced Darter is also booming in the Weerribben. Especially in the eastern part of the marsh, where many new populations were found. The species was also just found just outside the Weerribben, probably individuals that originated from the population in the conservation area itself. The Norfolk Damselfly is still only seen flying in one spot and is therefore very vulnerable. The population consists of around 2,000 individuals. In total 50 species of dragonflies are found in the Weerribben, it is one the most important dragonfly areas in the Netherlands.

#### Butterflies.

In recent years, a fauna inventory was carried out in 50% of the Wieden. The Grizzled Skipper was seen in some new locations, and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was also seen again. Unfortunately, we did not see the Large Copper in the Wieden this year. Behind the scenes, together with the Province and Staatsbosbeheer , we are working hard on a new plan for the return of the Large Copper. The connection with the Weerribben in particular will be improved.

In the Weerribben, the population of the Large Copper is comparable to that of last year. On some sites there was a decline, but on others there was an increase of this butterfly. Some reed fields were mown a few weeks later specifically to encourage the development of the Large Copper caterpillars.

#### *Cultural heritage:*

Natuurmonumenten is currently working on the perception of a number of special heritage and landscape elements in the landscape of the Wieden.

In the Weerribben, a special Reed book was published by a local photographer focusing on the skilled trademanship of the Reed cutter.

### **37. NETHERLANDS - NAARDERMEER NATURE RESERVE**

#### **1&2. 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.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. *Long term improvement of the hydrological conditions of the reserve needs reduced pumping of drinking water in the Gooi hills and the separation of sewage water and surface water to increase quality of infiltration.*

Ad 1. No changes or progress.

2. *In order to complete all adequate actions of restoration and nature development it is of high priority that Natuurmonumenten gets financial support to complete the buffer zone around the core area of the reserve. Nature restoration and development around the Naardermeer core area is to be fully completed; to that end missing lands (notably in polders south of the lake) should be made available to Natuurmonumenten, mainly in view of the long-term maintenance of optimal water level management and the restoration of biodiversity. The province and the Dutch Government Service for Land and Water Use are urged to make greater efforts to finalise the Naardermeer recovery plan (1993).*

Ad 2. The governmental budget-cuts from the past are to be compensated the next 2 years. This means that the provinces will get more money to complete the National Nature Network. It is likely that Natuurmonumenten is supported. Possibly one of the biggest missing-links in the buffer zone will be in our possession in 2017.

3. *A) The function of the Naardermeer as a core area in the ecological network (“green main structure”) needs that all possible measures are taken to avoid habitat fragmentation in the corridor landscapes towards the IJmeer, the IJsselmeer, the Vecht River, the Ankeveense Plassen and the Gooi hills.*  
*B) In the regional planning the creation of the “natte as”(wet axis or corridor with Naardermeer as core area) between Amsterdam and Hilversum is to be promoted and must be given high priority.*

Ad 3. More and more ecological corridors are being developed. The connection to the Vecht River is almost complete. The zone towards IJmeer and IJsselmeer is in progress. Both connections should be ready in 2020.

4. *A) The establishment of larger ecological zones in the surrounding agricultural area enabling the further restoration of water levels is recommended, in order to avoid leakage from the reserve and further sinking of peat layers.*  
*B) Restoration programmes transforming polders into wetlands must be encouraged in order to link the Naardermeer with its surroundings; this needs agro-environmental agreements with the agricultural sector.*

Ad 4. Currently talks are going on to purchase more farmlands and it is likely to succeed.

5. *The possibilities to improve the connecting corridor between Naardermeer and Ankeveense plassen by reconstructing the actual road on pillars (removal of a barrier) are to be considered.*

Ad 5. Realised in 2013.

6. A) *In relation to the construction of a new motorway connection (A6-A9), the zero option, alternative routes and the possibility of underground passage NW of the reserve are to be duly investigated in a preliminary Environmental Impact Study.*
- B) *The effects of widening the A1 on the nearby reserve are to be minimised.*
- C) *Risks for pollution deriving from transport along motorways and railroad are to be minimised and carefully caught.*
- D) *In 2009 the Committee of Ministers renewed de EU diploma under the **condition** that:*
- the authorities concerned are urged to respect the integrity of the open polder area surrounding the Naardermeer and to abandon all projects related to the motorway connection (A6-A9) which would have negative effects on the diploma area.*

Ad 6D. In 2006 the decision was made to widen the current A1 motorway instead of connecting A6-A9 with a new motorway. Since then the possibilities of an underground passage or alternative routes are abandoned. In the years following 2006 the plan for widening the A1 became more concrete and in 2013 the actual widening started. If everything goes as planned it will be finished in 2020.

### **3. Site Management**

#### *10.1. Improvements made*

- 10.1.1. *Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna.* LIFE programme New LIFE for Dutch fens is finished. The restoration actions improved the conditions for marsh birds and peat vegetation. It is not yet known how the bird population has reacted, data-analysing is not completed yet.
- 10.1.2. *Protection against the elements (fire, water regime).* The defos-installation is too old to be in process anymore. This installation removes fosfates out of the water to make sure the right conditions for underwater vegetation are available. The Waterboard and Natuurmonumenten are in contact to find a solution for the nearby future.
- 10.1.3. *Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)* None.
- 10.1.4. *Field equipment (hides and study facilities).* None.
- 10.1.5. *Waste management.* None.
- 10.1.6. *Use of renewable energy systems.* No changes.

#### *10.2. Management*

- 10.2.1. *Administrative department: changes made.* None.
- 10.2.2. *Wardens' department: changes made.* Currently the whole Natuurmonumenten organisation is being transformed to meet the challenges for the future. Shorter lines from plans to actions and more contact with local communities are two of the goals. Since October 2016 a new manager has taken over.
- 10.2.3. *Internal policing measures.* No changes.
- 10.2.4. *Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action.* None

### **4. Boundaries**

No changes since last year.

### **5. Other information**

None.

## **6. Natural heritage (general a biotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation**

6.1. *Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthrop origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated.* None.

6.2. *Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetation cover; presumed causes.*

None.

*In 2009 the Committee of Ministers renewed de EU diploma under the recommendation that: the decreasing area and quality of reedbeds (phragmites and other pioneer vegetation) should be subject to specific research and increased management efforts.*

This decreasing of reedbeds takes place at more sites than lake Naardermeer only. In lake Naardermeer a few small reedbeds are fenced out since 2012: a net around the reed disables geese to get in and eat young reed. It takes some time but the results are hopeful so in 2015 a wider area is fenced, this is repeated in 2016.

6.3. *Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds.* No great changes visible in the statistics for the populations of purper heron, grey geese or black tern.

## **7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**

7.1. *Cultural heritage: changes concerning cultural heritage.* None.

7.2. *Changes concerning the socio-economic context.* The new law for nature, presented mid 2014, is in order by January 2017.

## **8. Education and scientific interest**

8.1. *Visitors – Information policy*

8.1.1. *Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.).* No changes.

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

During the year almost all of the excursions on Lake Naardermeer were full-booked. Approximately 7000 visitors enjoyed a boat-trip to the cormorants or the duck-decoy in 2016.

8.1.3. *Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)* None.

8.2. *Scientific research.* None other than the normal bird-research.

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

8.2.2. *Scientific publications.* None.

## **11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas**

Due to the EU diploma both the Waterboard and Natuurmonumenten are very conscious of getting some sort of a new defos-installation. Both parties, along with the local governments, have agreed to take all the steps necessary to protect the watervegetations the Naardermeer is famous for. At least for the next 10 years a solution is needed. Regarding the European Diploma visibility, Naardermeer did not do anything in particular.



### 38. POLAND – BIALOWIEZA NATIONAL PARK

**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. Draw up a peer-reviewed ten-year management plan for the national park by the end of 2009** - The Minister of Environment approved the long term Protection Plan for the Białowieża National Park on 7 November, 2014. The regulation of the Minister of Environment of 7 November, 2014 on the establishment of the protection plan for the Białowieża National Park came into effect on 23 December, 2014. English translation of the document was attached to the annual report for 2014.

**2. Have all primeval forest stands and functional corridors linking the various reserves designated part of the Białowieża forest and afforded full protection**

Minister of Environment declared that strengthening protection of the Białowieża Forest is the priority for the Ministry. The decision of limiting timber exploitation from the part of Białowieża Forest managed by the State Forests administration was undertaken by the Ministry in October of 2010. A 10-year management plan for the Forest Districts of the Białowieża Forest was established and accepted by the Ministry of the Environment. It states that within the years 2012–2022 the total timber production cannot exceed 485 thousand cubic meters.

A long-term management plan for the Natura 2000 site “Białowieża Forest” was signed at 6 of November 2015.

**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.

Also recommends that:

**1. national park regulations and forest management rules be revised to require districts (counties) located within the state forest and the Voivodship Nature Conservation Officer to work with national park management, the scientific council and independent experts, and that public consultation be undertaken in relation to planned activities in all protected areas;**

Institutions involved in the management of the Białowieża Forest cooperate and implement the consultation process on different levels. This is performed mainly by participation of managers, researchers and representatives of local authorities in scientific councils and advisory bodies. Scientific Council of Białowieża National Park includes representatives of local governments (chairman of District Council of Białowieża, member of Regional Council of Podlasie Region, borough leader of Narewka), and other stakeholders (Director of the Regional Directorate of the Environmental Protection, Director of the Regional Directorate of State Forests, as well as representatives of NGOs, scientists, Belarusian National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” etc.) who participate in that way in the national park management. On the other hand the Director of Białowieża National Park is a member of the Scientific and Social Council of the Białowieża Forest Promotional Complex.

The cooperation between the Białowieża National Park and the State Forests Administration was enhanced by joint preparation of the application to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on change of the name, boundaries and criteria of inscription of the World Heritage Property “Belovezhskaya Pushcha / Białowieża Forest”. The application was accepted at the World Heritage Committee meeting in 2014 in Doha, Qatar, and at present the World Heritage Site “Białowieża Forest” covers almost the whole area of the Forest (the map was attached to the report for 2014). In order to facilitate the cooperation among



Emergency logging II age class [21-40]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency logging III age class [41-60]	0	26,6	8,95	5,3	6,5	0,65	3,5	51,5
Emergency logging IV older age class [61-80 and older]	22,43	798,54	208,13	296,61	80,45	5,2	93,27	1504,63
<b>TOTAL m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>22,43</b>	<b>825,14</b>	<b>217,08</b>	<b>301,91</b>	<b>86,95</b>	<b>5,85</b>	<b>96,77</b>	<b>1556,13</b>

**3. education and training activities be stepped up so as to support the redistribution of jobs, with a shift away from the forestry sector towards the conservation and sustainable eco-tourism sector, thereby increasing the number of interesting local jobs for young people;**

The Education Unit as well as Nature and Forest Museum of BNP provide educational programs for about 60–80 thousand people annually. It includes both passive actions like educational natural science exhibitions and active participation in natural sciences or ecology education (about 4–5 thousand people annually). Main activities include educational projects for schools; outdoor activities for youngsters and adults arranged due to visitors’ needs or Park’s educational assignments; outdoor courses and trainings for teachers; periodical lessons for local schools’ pupils and students; natural science knowledge competitions, art and photography contests related to natural science and culture; educational paths; publications: thematic brochures and leaflets, collections of educational scenarios, and maps. Visits of official delegations can also form the opportunity for natural education concerning primeval forests and natural processes.

Interesting educational events/activities which took part for the first time in BNP in the analysed period are as follows:

- thematic walking addressed to the local community, approximating values of BNP and its history (attended by 113 people),
- competition "Those that jump and croak are demanding protection" of a plastic, photographic and literary which was attended by 831 participants (children, adolescents and adults),
- Educational games

A computer game "Mushrooms in the colors of the rainbow," on-line; children, youth, adults

A computer game "Not only hats" on-line; children, youth, adults

Page on FB GRZYBOWO.NATUROWO, on-line; adults, youth, children

Multimedia presentation "Deceptive lookalikes", on-line, adults, youth

- "We are looking for the treasures of history and culture" - classes with the use of questing and geocatching; students from a primary school in Bialowieza; (About 10 people)

- "Cotton Painted" - workshops of family painting canvas bags motifs reminiscent of the tradition of folk embroidered towels Podlasie (35 people)

In 2016 BNP opened a new Tourist Information Point visited in May-September 2016 by over 4760 people, 20% of them being foreigners.

**4. tourist access to fully protected areas be restricted to pre-2006 levels; this means critically reviewing the use of the existing narrow-gauge railway line, including rebuilt “railway stations”, in**

**accordance with the national park's admission capacity; kayaking and other aquatic leisure activities on the Narewka and Hwoźna rivers should remain strictly prohibited;**

The number of tourists visiting the strictly protected area has been kept on the same level for the last dozen years, in 2016 number of visitors was significantly higher (at end of September was reaching 26464 person, but it was a record year also in Animal Park – almost 150 thousand visitors – more than in previous record year - 2009). We think, that it was some fluctuations and so far there are no reasons for applying additional regulations – we will see how it will be in 2017. But we improve our system of minimizing of anthropopressure system (like portable footbridge), so impact of this bigger number of tourist should be not bigger, than normal one. No new tourist paths were created. During and shortly after periods of bad weather (lots of rain) when the pressure of trekking groups could affect tourist trails and their surroundings, access for tourists is limited to protect the area from any damage. The idea of revitalizing of a railway through the forest and the national park was dropped. Kayaks and canoes are banned on the Narewka and Hwozna rivers within the borders of BNP.

**5. town planning be critically reviewed with a view to preventing the disappearance (as a result of urbanisation) of areas serving as buffer zones for the park and of historic rural landscapes, and guarding against the negative impact of any increase in cross-border motor vehicle traffic within the national park;**

The works on establishing the complete buffer zone around BNP including Białowieża and Masiewo Glades are being carried out. Within the frames of a project concerning protection of *Aquila pomarina*, conducted by Regional Directorate of State Forest and Polish Society for Bird Protection and finished in 2014, restoring of agricultural use (mowing and grazing) of grasslands within Białowieża Glades took place to keep the area open – it is also writed in Natura 2000 taks fo Białowieża Forest. Another activity within this project included ecological restoration of the Narewka river within Białowieża Glade to increase water retention and biodiversity of the river. Any plans of new infrastructure in the nearest neighborhood of the Park are given negative opinions by the administration of the BNP. The current surveys do not show any signs of traffic increase within the area of the Park and in its close surroundings.

**6. legislative decisions be taken to give Bialowieża National Park authorities the necessary rights and resources to manage the free movement of European bison throughout the Bialowieża forest, and that efforts be made to co-operate with a view to opening a large mammal corridor in the border fence between Poland and Belarus, inside the world heritage site;**

The border fence is situated within the territory of Belarus so this issue can be solved exclusively by the Belarusian State Party.

The fence is the physical barrier for a few species, mainly ungulates: the European bison, elk, red deer, roe deer, and wild boar. Telemetry studies show that the lynx and the wolf cross the fence. Smaller animals migrating along the river courses, such as the beaver or the otter, may also cross the border fence.

Taking into account scientific data concerning the genetic analysis of the European bison populations from both parts of Białowieża Forest and conclusions on hybridisation of the Belarusian population as well as more than 85-year long process of the species restoration, we express an opinion that the decision on the further management of the fence existing along the States border shall be preceded by detailed studies of genetic purity of the populations living in both parts of Białowieża Forest. We believe that management of the fence shall be discussed widely and all advantages and disadvantages of its further existence shall be taken into account.

**7. a bilateral conservation agreement between the competent Polish and Belarus ministries be ratified by the end of 2008, confirming the necessary principles for cross-border co-operation between the Białowieża and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Parks with regard to priorities for research, management, tourism and education, coupled with ecologically healthy forest**

**management, bearing in mind the “Forest of Hope” appeal, the conclusions of the 2000 Kamenyuki Conference and the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee;**

The agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Poland and Republic of Belarus concerning the environmental issues was negotiated and finalized. The agreement was signed in Białowieża, on September 12, 2009. It covers different aspects of cooperation between both countries. The English translation of the agreement was attached to the report of 2012.

In 2012 Polish and Belarusian partners submitted to the World Heritage Center the re-nomination dossier of the World Heritage Site. Almost the whole Polish part of the Białowieża Forest is included into the boundaries of the enlarged area of the World Heritage Property “Białowieża Forest”. The application was accepted by the World Heritage Committee in 2014. Thanks to further cooperation between Poland and Belarus a Transboundary Steering Committee for the World Heritage Property “Białowieża Forest” was established and an agreement on elaboration and implementation of a common management plan for the property was signed (details in part 1 of the report).

**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.

The Minister of the Environment has approved the long term Protection Plan for the Białowieża National Park. The document was signed on November 7, 2014, and came into effect on December 23, 2014.

BNP monitors free-living population of European bison in the whole Polish part of the Białowieża Forest. Some European bison are kept in European Bison Breeding Centre of BNP. The counting of free-living bison is carried out during winter. There were 578 bison in free-living herds and 40 in captivity at the end of 2015. Based on data from previous years we may say that bison population is still increasing. In 2016 program of meadows contract was canceled due to no chance for national park to collect a money form different founds.

In 2015, in the northern part of BNP the signposts and some resting and viewing points were renewed on the.

The European Bison Show Reserve (Animal Park) is being modernized to provide visitors with better opportunities to observe animals and improve the safety of both people and animals. A new education and exhibition centre is planned to be open in the Animal Park starting at the end of 2017. The building is planned as a passive construction with various ecological solutions.

Some buildings of BNP administration were equipped with photovoltaic cells.

**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.

As the European Diploma for Białowieża National Park was suspended in 2007 and we are awaiting the opinion of experts on this issue, we have not made any use of the European Diploma logo.

List of scientific publications concerning Białowieża National Park and Białowieża Forest published in the period 2014/2015 is included in App.1.

## Appendix 1

### Publications in 2016

#### Publications presenting the results of original research from the area of the Białowieża Forest

- Bartold M. – Analiza porównawcza wartości wskaźnika wegetacji obszarów leśnych w Polsce na podstawie wieloletnich obserwacji satelitarnych NOAA AVHRR i SPOT VEGETATION. *Sylvan*, 160, 2: 153-161.
- Brzeziecki B., – Wieloletnia dynamika drzewostanów w Puszczy Białowieskiej (w warunkach ochrony ścisłej). [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 45-58.
- Gazda A., Miścicki S. – Prognoza zmian składu gatunkowego drzewostanów Białowieskiego Parku Narodowego. *Sylvan*, 160, 4: 309-319.
- Hurnikova Z., Kołodziej-Sobocińska M., Dvorožňáková E., Niemczynowicz A., Zalewski A. – An invasive species as an additional parasite reservoir: *Trichinella* in introduced American mink (*Neovison vison*). *Veterinary Parasitology*, doi: 10.1016/j.vetpar.2016.06.010.
- Jaroszewicz B. – Zmiany udziału świerka pospolitego w drzewostanach Puszczy Białowieskiej w kontekście dynamiki liczebności kornika drukarza *Ips typographus* (L.). [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 87-100.
- Kraśiński Z. A., Kraśińska M., Raczyński J. – Żubry nizinne i nizinno-kaukaskie w Puszczy Białowieskiej. *Chrońmy Przyrodę Ojczyzn*, 72, 2: 100-109.
- Krzysiak M. K., Iwaniak W., Kęsik-Maliszewska J., Olech W., Larska M. – Serological study of exposure to selected arthropod-borne pathogens in European bison (*Bison bonasus*) in Poland. *Transboundary and Emerging Diseases*. Vol. 63. doi: 10.1111/tbed.12524.
- Mitrus S., Hebda G., Wesołowski T. – Cohabitation of tree holes by ants and breeding birds in a temperate deciduous forest. *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*, 31, 2: 135-139.
- Samojlik T., Fedotova A., Kuijper D. P. J. – Transition from traditional to modern forest management shaped the spatial extent of cattle pasturing in Białowieża Primeval Forest in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Ambio*, 2016, DOI 10.1007/s13280-016-0795-4.
- Schmidt K., Davoli F., Kowalczyk R., Randi E. – Does kinship affect spatial organization in a small and isolated population of a solitary felid: the Eurasian lynx? *Integrative Zoology*, 2016, doi: 10.1111/1749-4877.12182.

#### The development of popular, informational and inspection

- Bohdan A. – Stan ochrony Puszczy Białowieskiej oczami organizacji pozarządowych. [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 109-120.
- Czech E. K. – Prawne aspekty gospodarki leśnej i trwale zrównoważonej gospodarki leśnej na obszarze Puszczy Białowieskiej. [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 35-44.

- Kołodziej-Sobocińska M., Nowy tasiemiec u dzików w Puszczy Białowieskiej. Głos Białowieży, 8-9: 23-24.
- Krasińska M. – Moje związki z Katedrą Anatomii Zwierząt Profesora Kazimierza Krysiaka na Wydziale Weterynaryjnym SGGW w Warszawie. Biuletyn Północno-Wschodniej Izby Lekarsko-Weterynaryjnej, 1: 68-74.
- Krasiński Z. A. – Wspomnienie o Profesorze Kazimierzu Krysiaku. Biuletyn Północno-Wschodniej Izby Lekarsko-Weterynaryjnej, 1: 75-77.
- Pawlaczyk P. – Martwe drzewa w ochronie żywej przyrody. [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 59-86.
- Puszcza Białowieska i okolice. Mapa turystyczna. Skala 1:50 000. [Red. R. Trzmielewski, P. Pietroń; skład i proj. okładki D. Kruszelnicka; tekst C. Okołów]. Wyd. III. Wydawnictwo Kartograficzne „Compass”, Kraków.
- Ronikier-Dolańska A. – Gatunki i siedliska obszaru Natura 2000 Puszcza Białowieska PLC 200004 – liczebność, powierzchnia i aktualny stan ochrony. [W:] Stan ekosystemów leśnych Puszczy Białowieskiej. Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Ministerstwa Środowiska i Generalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa, 28 października 2015, Centrum Informacyjne Lasów Państwowych, Warszawa 2016: 25-33.
- Samojlik T. 2016 – Rozkwit i upadek produkcji potażu w Puszczy Białowieskiej w XVII-XIX w. Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Dendrologicznego, 64: 9-19.

### **39. POLAND – BIESZCZADY NATIONAL PARK**

**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.

**Condition 1:** the government concerned must undertake to adopt a management plan for the diploma-holding area, within two years at the most following the renewal of the period of validity;

**The Protection Plan for the years 2011-2031 was made and submitted in the Ministry of the Environment. Further work is underway on the preparation the Regulation of the Minister of the Environment implementing this plan. On the basis of a draft plan for 20 years for each year the BNP administration prepared protection tasks for three years period. Three years Action Plan for 2016-2018 was approved by the Minister of the Environment at the beginning of 2016.**

**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.

**Recommendation 1:** extend the perimeter of the diploma-holding area by including in the park the territory currently separating its two cores;

**The current legal situation in Poland does not make it possible to extend the area of the National Park without consent of local communities. Due to reluctance of local authorities, it is not appropriate to initiate the procedure of Park enlargement. However, in the area separating the enclave of the Park from its main complex, the Promotional Forest Complex "Bieszczady Forests" was created on 29th of November 2011. Complex includes forest districts of Stuposiany, Lutowska**

and Cisna and covers the area of 24 234 ha. It seems that “Complex” support the nature conservation in acceptable level.

**Recommendation 2:** implement a programme to study and monitor the status and development of the large predators on the scale of the BNP and the three neighbouring parks of Cisniansko-Wetlinski, Dolina Sanu and Nadsanski; recruit for this purpose a zoologist responsible for this programme to the diploma-holding area’s scientific team;

From 2012, the BNP along with the Pro Carpathia Foundation, Magura National Park and 11 forest districts are carrying out the project “Protection of forest wildlife refuges – migration corridors” founded by Swiss - Polish Cooperation Programme. The aim of the project is to ensure consistency of environment for the animals in the southern part the Podkarpackie province by creating new and maintaining existing ecological corridors.

Apart from public roads monitoring leading to the location of the animal crossings, important component of the Bieszczady National Park activity is to identify the presence and state of indicator species (predators and ungulates) in BNP and its buffer zone. The information collected to date is published on the Park website ([www.bdpn.pl](http://www.bdpn.pl)) in the "Science" - "Fauna" - „Wildlife Monitoring". The project currently employs two researchers performing monitoring tasks. The project is now at the final stage. There are prepared publications presenting the final results.

**Recommendation 3:** step up cooperation between the management of the BNP and the municipalities, with a view to forging a common vision and designing common objectives for regional planning and development, taking the biological and landscape interest and sensitive nature of the sites into account;

Local governments have their respective representatives in the Science Council of the Bieszczady National Park. The work progress within the Protection Plan has been presented to them at the Scientific Council meetings. Representatives of the BNP take part in meetings of the municipal council of Lutowska where discussion is held on the spatial management and sharing of land for tourism. The Council had two meetings in 2016.

**Recommendation 4:** draw on the activities and expertise of the framework Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, particularly for the application of its articles on (4) conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, (5) spatial planning and (7) forestry.

Bieszczady National Park together with the partners from Slovakia and Ukraine is carrying out the tasks of trilateral Transboundary Biosphere Reserve “Eastern Carpathians”. There is common protective zoning in the Reserve area in the countries involved.

The Park participates in the broad cooperation in terms of the natural heritage protection in Reserve countries, as well as scientific cooperation between institutions dealing with nature protection in the countries stated above.

This includes: organizing and hosting various conferences, seminars, research expeditions and the publication of the scientific journal “Roczniki Bieszczadzkie” (Bieszczady Annals) containing the articles of the Polish, Slovak and Ukrainian authors.

**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.

The BNP administration extended the total size of strictly protected areas in the park ( presently 70%). The enlargement is included in Action Plan for 2016-2018 years, accepted by the Minister of the Environment.



**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 of the BNP's external boundaries**

**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.

**In 2016, the largest ever number of visitors – 487.0 thousand was recorded on the foot trails (in the period from late April to mid-November). The national park administration need financial support for for the improvement of the surface of walking trails and protection of nature in the closest surroundings of trails.**

**Bieszczady National Park makes formal efforts to incorporate the most valuable fragments of beech forests in the Park to the list of World Natural Heritage.**

**In January 2016 Poland and 10 other countries, Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine sent to MaB/UNESCO Committee in Paris the Nomination Dossier related to 33 objects. In June Poland withdrew its proposal because of the need for public consultation on the planned entry. Such a procedure has not previously been made. It is expected that it will be completed to the end of December 2016.**

**In 2016 the national park published the most important so far publication the Monograph of BNP, 410 pages with maps, etc.**

**We use of the European Diploma logo on the official website [www.bdpn.pl](http://www.bdpn.pl) and on the new information boards which were installed in the park area since last renewal.**

**11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas**

The European Diploma of Protected Areas significantly helped the Park in gaining financial resources from the national authorities as well as European Union. The award was the strong argument against the continuing plans to create the border crossing with Ukraine in the village of Wolosate.

**40. PORTUGAL – DESERTAS ISLANDS NATURE RESERVE**

**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. that The Portuguese Government continues to take the necessary steps to preserve the current islands status of the Desertas Islands and to unequivocally support the Regional Government of Madeira in all matters concerning the nature reserve:** The legal status of the Reserve has not been changed and there are no perspectives that such changes will occur, even considering a far future.

**2. that the responsible regional authority updates the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve by the end of 2016: a. taking into consideration the enlargement of the strictly protected area; improving conservation efforts in terms of personnel, logistics and budget necessary for the proper management of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve:** the responsible regional authority is committed to update the management plan of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve by the end of 2016.

**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. **take all necessary precautions to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve:** stringent quarantine measures are rigorously implemented to ensure that no species of plants and animals are introduced to the reserve. Visiting boats are forbidden to pass any ropes to land and all the food and equipment of the site management staff, or other visitors, are transported in sealed containers. Additionally, during the summer, when the number of visits to the island increases, a cordon of tubes with rodenticide is placed around the only official anchoring place of the island and these are inspected regularly.
2. **improve the existing monitoring system for the fauna and flora populations of the Desertas:** the flora and fauna conservation status is improving due to the success of the main actions of the project LIFE RECOVER NATURA - Recovery of the species and land habitats of the Natura 2000 sites Ponta de São Lourenço and Desertas Islands LIFE12 NAT/PT/000195 (2013-2017) (details given in <http://liferecovernatura.pnm.pt/>). The main actions of this project, involves an intensive monitoring on both flora and fauna and an evaluation of the regeneration of the natural habitats.
3. **analyse and publish studies carried out on the flora and fauna on Bugio, following the total eradication of alien species:** during 2016, local and foreign scientists develop various research projects on Bugio. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly.
4. **increase the efforts to combat soil erosion on the plateau surface of Bugio:** monitoring of the main actions of the project LIFE SOS Freira do Bugio – Urgent actions for the recovery of *Pterodroma feae* and its habitat LIFE06 NAT/PT/000184, which was developed between 2006 and 2010, has been maintained up to present, involving habitat restoration. There is a constant effort to combat soil erosion, considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Reserve.
5. **eradicate the goat population from Deserta Grande or at least keep the population very low and subject to a strict monitoring scheme:** the main actions of the project LIFE RECOVER NATURA - Recovery of the species and land habitats of the Natura 2000 sites Ponta de São Lourenço and Desertas Islands LIFE12 NAT/PT/000195 (2013-2017) (details given in <http://liferecovernatura.pnm.pt/>), involves an evaluation of population densities and distribution of goats; a significant reduction in the goat population and establishing a monitoring scheme that allows the evaluation of the success of the management measures implemented to control the goat population.
6. **promote the training of nature guides to accompany tourists in this area:** visitors are met by the Nature Wardens, accompany them along the informative circuit and then to the reception centre. In the case of maritime-tourist visitors, this guided tour is made by the staff of each company; whose employees have received specific training provided by the site management staff. The site management has also signed a protocol with the Regional Delegation of the National Trade Union of Tourist Activity, Translators and Interpreters, under which these professionals receive specific information that results in a better quality of information provided at the location.
7. **investigate if the increasing colony of yellow-legged gull (*Larus michahellis atlantis*) on Ilhéu Chão is having a negative impact on the breeding seabird populations on Deserta Grande and Bugio:** although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Ilhéu Chão, Deserta Grande and Bugio). Due to the remoteness of Desertas Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task.

2. **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.

The Serviço do Parque Natural da Madeira (Madeira Nature Park Services) was merged with Direção Regional de Florestas e Conservação da Natureza (Regional Body responsible for the Forestry and Nature Conservation), resulting the Instituto das Florestas e Conservação da Natureza (Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation), formally established on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2016. The Institute, with 350 employees and a budget of 14 million euros for the entire area of intervention merged by the two services referred to above, remains under the aegis of the Secretaria Regional do Ambiente e Recursos Naturais (Regional Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources).

**3. 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 occurred.

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

During 2016, the Reserve had the official visit of the President of the Portuguese Republic and Representatives; and of the President of the Madeira Regional Government and Representatives.

#### **41. PORTUGAL - SELVAGENS ISLANDS NATURE RESERVE**

**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. that The Portuguese Government continues to take the necessary steps to preserve the current islands status of the Selvagens Islands and to unequivocally support the Madeira Regional Government in all matters concerning the nature reserve, in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 15/86 of 21 May 1986:** The legal status of the Reserve has not been changed and there are no perspectives that such changes will occur, even considering a far future.

**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 to take all precautions to ensure that no non-native species of plants and animals are introduced:** No changes or deterioration of the environment occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply.

**2. Continue to improve the accommodation and the radio/phone system, which provides the capacity for wardens to contact their authorities in Madeira and their families:** A VSAT phone system with national indicative is installed, as well as a satellite internet system, fundamental for contacts, either with authorities as family. Small reconstruction and maintenance work was carried out at the biological stations of Selvagem Grande and Selvagem Pequena, to provide a better logistic support to the projects on going in the field and the comfort of the visitors.

**3. Continue the studies to survey the effect of the eradication of the alien species of the flora and fauna for the next few years:** The flora and fauna conservation status is improving due to the success of the alien species eradication project (2001 – 2004) (details given on the 2002 annual

report). Monitoring of the main actions of this project, is maintained up to present, involving an intensive monitoring on both flora and fauna: evaluate the effects of the programme on non-target species, namely gecko *Tarentola bischoffi* and pipit *Anthus berthelotii*; evaluate quantitatively the regeneration of the natural habitats of the island. Qualitative and quantitative data is being obtained every year and reports are being produced accordingly. During 2016, local and foreign scientists develop various research projects in the fields of flora and fauna in Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora.

4. **Make efforts to eliminate the breeding of the Yellow-legged Gull (*L. m. atlantis*) on Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora:** Although the yellow-legged gull (Atlantic form) *Larus michahellis atlantis* should not be considered an alien species, there is a constant effort to prevent their breeding on the islands (Selvagem Grande, Selvagem Pequena and Ilhéu de Fora). Due to the remoteness of Selvagens Islands and to their characteristics this is an easy and forward task.
5. **Increase the awareness of the importance of the cultural and geological heritage:** No changes occurred and the policies presented on the earlier annual reports still apply.
6. **Continue the programme of reconstruction of the remaining unrestored rubble walls:** Most of the remaining unrestored rubble walls of the plateau are now well preserved and maintenance efforts are considered one of the priority duties of the nature wardens of the Island.

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.

The Serviço do Parque Natural da Madeira (Madeira Nature Park Services) was merged with Direção Regional de Florestas e Conservação da Natureza (Regional Body responsible for the Forestry and Nature Conservation), resulting the Instituto das Florestas e Conservação da Natureza (Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation), formally established on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2016. The Institute, with 350 employees and a budget of 14 million euros for the entire area of intervention merged by the two services referred to above, remains under the aegis of the Secretaria Regional do Ambiente e Recursos Naturais (Regional Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources).

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 occurred.

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.

During 2016, as part of the construction of the Maritime Authority Structure in Selvagens Islands, several improvements works were made to the biological station of Selvagem Grande, in order to create the necessary conditions for the activation and operation of the Local Command Office of the Funchal Maritime Police (LCOFMP) and of the Extension of the Maritime Department of Funchal in Selvagens Islands. Within the system “Costa Segura” (Safe Coast), a Radar Station is in operation in Selvagem Grande, operated by the militarized Maritime Police from the LCOFMP, complemented with actions at sea, to guarantee the exercise of State authority, especially in the areas of surveillance and protection and preservation of the marine environment and safety of navigation, people and property throughout the maritime area.

During 2016, the Reserve had the official visit of the President of the Portuguese Republic and Representatives; and of the President of the Madeira Regional Government and Representatives.

#### 42. ROMANIA - PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK

**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. Complete the process of preparing and approving the new management plan by the end of 2011.

The Management Plan was submitted by the Park Administration to the Government for approval in 2011. It was analyzed by all the ministries and it was approved in December 2013 through the Governmental Decision No. 1057/2013.

The Park Administration has started from the 2012 a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, «The revision of Piatra Craiului National Park's Management Plan».

The scientific studies conducted under the framework of the above-mentioned project brought certain data on the species and habitats of European interest of Piatra Craiului, for a more adequate management of these elements. Based on the result of field studies there were included in the park's management plan some activities in order to maintain or bring the species and habitats of European interest in a favorable conservation status.

The revised management plan was sent in 2015 to the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forest to be legally approved by Government Decision.

**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. Secure the budget of the national park so that the national park administration is able to manage the park appropriately and has all financial resources needed in order to pay the staff on a regular basis.

The park budget is secured by the National Forest Administration (732.000 RON paid in 2013, 731.600 RON paid in 2014, 901.700 RON paid in 2015, 1.041.000 secured for 2016).

The park obtained some additional funds from projects financed by European Regional Development Fund and Romanian Government: 1.293.000 RON in 2004 and 1.122.900 RON in 2015

2. Complete the construction of the headquarters and other infrastructure, especially the exhibition room and other tourist facilities, within three years and make particular efforts to raise the appropriate funds to achieve this.

The Park Administration finished in 2016 a Sector Operational Program Pillar 4 project, «The improvement of the conservation status of Piatra Craiului National Park's biodiversity by public awareness, information, visiting and monitoring »

The aim of the project were:

- to set up the visitors sector of Piatra Craiului National Park Administration Headquarters from Zarnesti. The visitor sector was finalized and the public release was in april 2016;

- to build an information point for tourists in Curmatura area. The Information Center at Curmatura was finalized and the release was in 2016;

- to build 4 information points at the main entrances of the park. The information points were finalized;

- to set up four thematic tourist trails, with information panels - finalized;

- to realize a printed thematic guide for the tourist trails with an attached map, and a guide for protected species and habitats – finalized;

- to realize 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements of the park – finalized.

The project contained also provisions for the fauna, flora and habitats monitoring, which were implemented in the field.

3. Elaborate and implement a specific high profile programme devoted to the promotion, preservation and restoration of the local architecture and landscape; this exemplary programme should be implemented with the help of relevant specialists and contribute to making this region a model for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The architect from the Scientific Council, with the support of the Park Administration, elaborated a guide of how to build in order to preserve the local architecture and landscape, inspired also by the European Landscape Convention, and which was published as a hard copy.

The building rules were included in the Park Management Plan and encourage the use of local materials (timber and stone) for the new buildings and the preservation of the mountain village style with scattered houses.

The guide was distributed at the local authorities and the local communities. Now, it is compulsory, according the management plan, to use the guidelines included in this guide, for new buildings on the park's area.

It is available, as well, to be downloaded in electronic format on the park's web page: [www.pcrail.ro](http://www.pcrail.ro).

4. Pursue the scientific work and monitoring of biodiversity in every sector of the park; those activities should assess the status and trends of species and habitats, considering the national park as part of a functional ecosystem and consequently use appropriate methods and indicators to keep the national park administration aware of important changes to this ecosystem;

In 2013 there were monitored several species and habitats from Piatra Craiului National Park. 12 monitoring protocols are included in the SOP Project, including *Ligularia sibirica*, bats species from caves and bats species of European interest, capercaillie, chamois, birds of prey of European interest, forest habitats, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*. During the winter there were monitored the bats hibernating colonies from the caves to assess the conservation status. Most of the caves are closed and the bat population kept its number from the previous years. The large carnivores from the park were also monitored, using the snow-tracking method. During the spring there was monitored the capercaillie at the leking sites. The search for more leking sites is necessary, in order to estimate the population and the conservation status. At the end of spring and during the summer there were monitored several habitats of European importance (mountain hay meadows, bushes with *Pinus mugo* and *Rhododendron myrtifolium*, calcareous and calchist screes of the mountain to alpine level, alluvial forest with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*) and also the birds of prey to assess the threats and the conservation status. During the autumn there were monitored the birds of prey' species of European importance during the annual migration and also the red deer at the mating season. In October it was organized a monitoring action to evaluate the chamois population. At the end of autumn and beginning of winter there were monitored also the forest habitats to assess the conservation status and the trend of the clear-cutting areas and to prevent the illegal cutting of the Christmas trees.

All the monitoring protocols were conducted in the field on 2013, 2014, 2015 and will be conducted in 2016.

There were no significant changes in the species and habitats conservation status from 2013 to 2016. All the monitored species and habitats are in a favorable conservation status.

5. Regarding both central and local forest authorities, more attention should be paid to the enforcement of the forest law on the national park's fringe and in the surroundings of the park; the measures taken and the results obtained should be reported to the Council of Europe on an annual basis;

The Park Administration with the authorities organized 188 control actions to enforce the forest law. Large areas of forest (approx. 15000 ha) were purchased in the park vicinity in Arges County by the Carpathia Foundation, which aims to conserve all the bought forest land.

6. Pursue the efforts made by the national park administration to address the litter and garbage issues and to engage a new phase of activities facilitated by this administration; a detailed report on the results of those activities should be sent to the Council of Europe every two years.

In 2015 the Park Administration organized 14 garbage collection campaigns, some of them with volunteers. We had several meetings with the local authorities in Arges County and also with the County Prefect, in order to improve the pace of the garbage collection during the tourist season, especially on Dambovicioara Valley.

**2. 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.

The implemented projects led to the finalization of the park infrastructure, which contributed to the visitors information. The visitor center in Zarnesti had more than 6000 visitors in 2016, and hosted several important events.

The park budget increased with the help of the National Forest Administration, and a new person was hired for the management of the visitors in the center.

**3. 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 change.

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

The European Diploma logo, was broader used on the Piatra Craiului National Park's printed materials, together with an explanation of the reasons for awarding the European Diploma:

- Piatra Craiului National Park: guide of European and national protected species and habitats (300 pages) – English version and Romanian version;

- Piatra Craiului National Park: thematic guide of the visitor trails (300 pages) – English version and Romanian version;

- 6 information panels inside each of the 4 information points at the main entrances of the park – English and Romanian;

- a total number of 18 information panels displayed on 4 thematic tourist trails - English and Romanian;

- 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements (species and habitats of European interest) of the park – English version and Romanian version;
- one leaflet for the general presentation of the park – English version and Romanian version.

### 43. ROMANIA - DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

**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.

There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

**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. the process of co-ordinating the ecological management of the delta system with the three countries concerned (Moldova, Romania and Ukraine) should continued and strengthened and the possibility of establishing a cross-border protected area should be considered in the framework of the trilateral agreement signed by the three countries concerned, under the auspices of the Council of Europe;*

At this moment Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority is partner in two projects financed under the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, with the participation of entities from all the three countries:

- Consolidation of the nature protected areas' network for biodiversity protection and sustainable development in the Danube Delta and Lower Prut river region (PAN Nature) One result of the project is the designation of the Biosphere Reserve "Lower Prut" in the Republic of Moldova. The three concerned countries have in view in the future to proceed to the declaration of a cross-border biosphere reserve between Danube Delta and Lower Prut area

- Inventory, assesment and remediation of anthropogenic sources of pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova

*2. the possibility of reactivating the co-operation between other European Diploma sites which are deltas (Camargue National Reserve (France) and Donana National Park (Spain)) should be explored;*

In October 2016 was signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania) and the Joint Union for the Management of the Natural Regional Park of Camargue (France) on the cooperation in the protected areas. In 2017 will start the implementation of the actions included in the Memorandum of Understanding.

*3. the monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism) should be strengthened in relation with the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystems and the value of the reserve; special attention should be paid to the shipping activities (movement of boats and speeding) as well as to illegal fishing and hunting;*

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism) and all the other aspects mentioned above. The rules for navigation inside the reserve are stipulated in the Governmental Decision no. 538/2015.



*4. potential external threats should be continually monitored, especially the likely adverse transboundary impact on the ecosystem of the whole delta of the works related to the Bystroe canal in the Ukrainian sector;*

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes as well the monitoring of the aspects on the impact of the transport activities from the Chilia channel, as a consequence of the functioning of the navigation channel Danube – Black Sea (Bystroe), built in the Ukrainian side of the Danube Delta.

*5. the usefulness of banning hunting, or of managing hunting on a demonstrably sustainable basis, on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, especially in the most sensitive areas, should be studied;*

The hunting activity on the protected area's territory was banned from 2013.

*6. a system for better management of natural fisheries resources should be explored for the benefit of the local people, in order to reduce the categories and number of intermediary actors/stakeholders; the fish resources should be managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority;*

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority managed the fish resources on the reserve's territory, based on the Management Plan and Regulations approved by the Governmental Decision no. 763/2015.

*7. information concerning access of boats to vulnerable parts of the reserve should be made readily available to the public;*

All the necessary information related to the economic activities allowed on the protected area's territory are posted on the web page: [www.ddbra.ro](http://www.ddbra.ro)

*8. the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to bring technical and financial assistance to the local populations, municipalities and private operators in different fields (land planning, water supplies, sewage treatment) and assist with information on organizing and developing activities compatible with the aims of the reserve, such as ecotourism, bird watching and handicrafts;*

For the financial period 2014-2020 there are several financial programmes supporting different kind of activities and stakeholders and beneficiaries from inside the reserve. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority supports local communities in accessing the funds.

*9. the restoration programme of the existing building should be continued, using traditional materials and natural local products; the cultural value of the reserve, especially the different ethnic roots of the populations, should be enhanced with the engineering and technical input of specialized institutes;*

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys the ways that the objectives presented by the implementation on the Building Regulation in Reserve are followed.

*10. an external review and assessment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve's Conservation Strategy (for example, priorities, management objectives, operational objectives and financial requirement) should be organized in 2010, ten years after its declaration, with the support of international expertise;*

In September 2015 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve organized an international meeting for an external review and assessment of the Conservation Strategy.

*11. the necessary funding should be provided in order to improve the capacities/ performance of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority; a feasibility study on the creation of a financial mechanism should be undertaken so that all commercial activities and uses (not only tourist activities) contribute to the financing of the reserve;*

The legal framework foreseen measures for economic-social development of the Danube Delta area. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority improves its budget with funds from taxes, fees, permits and authorizations issuing.

*12. the adoption of the legal framework (master plan, Law on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Law on Protected Areas) should be accelerated;*

Based on the Management Plan, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority proposed every year new legal documents to be adopted by the Government, in view to support its activity for nature conservation and protection and sustainable development in the area.

*13. noting that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure is in operation, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to analyze carefully the requests for new wind farms in the neighborhood of the reserve*

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys carefully the development of wind farms in the reserve's neighborhood area.

**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 in site management in relation to finances since the last report.

The staff number increased this year with 20 new specialists and control/ surveying staff.

**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.

There are no changes to the boundaries of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve since the last report.

**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.

#### **44. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – OKA NATIONAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

**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. There were no changes in territorial integrity. In the reserve there is a natural dynamics of ungulates, predatory animals

2. Zoning of the biospherical reserve is observed: three zones of the wildlife reserve are allocated: core, buffer zone and zone of cooperation

3. Effective protection of the reserve

4. Continued research in full, including habitat restoration Desman

5. The ecological education and interaction with the local population

All the conditions have been met

After drawing up the periodic report the Oka reserve received some more **remarks** from the Advisory board for adjustment of activity of the Oka reserve for renewal of the diploma

**I. Advisory Board expressed fears concerning the small size of a transitional zone.**

**Response**

The administration of the reserve and Heads of administrations of Municipalities (Spassky, Shilovsky, Klepikovsky and Kasimovsky districts) adjacent to the territory of the reserve signed the Cooperation agreement and joint activity in the field of assistance to a sustainable development of the Oka Biosphere Reserve (Agreement is applied). In this regard, and also in compliance recommendations of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Russian Federation the spatial configuration and the areas of functional zones exchanged. At the same time the sizes of buffer and cooperation zones significantly increased.

The boundaries of functional zones: core and buffer are defined in accordance with the decisions, orders and regulations of these areas approved by the relevant government authorities. They were attached to the periodic report. The boundaries of areas of cooperation are defined in accordance with the Agreement on cooperation and joint activities in promoting the sustainable development of the Oka Biosphere Reserve with the heads of with the Heads of the municipal administrations of municipal districts, adjacent to the reserve territory: Spassky Shilovsky, Klepikovsky and Kasimovsky

a) Area and spatial configuration:

	Previous report (nomination form or periodic review) and date	Proposed changes (if any)
Area of terrestrial Core Area(s)	22604 ha	22604 ha
Area of terrestrial Buffer Area(s)	33346 ha	91950 ha
Area of terrestrial Cooperation Area(s)	22975 ha	1 011 541 ha

b) Human population of the biosphere reserve:

	Previous report (nomination form or periodic review) and date	At present (please state date of census or other source)
Core Area(s) (permanent and seasonally)	0	0
Buffer Area (s) (permanent and seasonally)	No data	0
Cooperation Area(s) (permanent and seasonally)	No data	116275 persons

Thus, the area of a core did not change, the area of a buffer zone increased by 2,8 times, the area of a zone of cooperation increased by 44 times.

**II. Advisory Board are interested in more information about the the participation of local people in management.**

**Response**

30.05.2016 was held Academic Council dedicated to the discussion of the comments of the Advisory Board, in particular the strengthening of activities

Coordinating Council of the Biosphere Reserve, the inclusion of new members. The result was a list of 25 members of the Coordination Council, except where heads of administrations of the surrounding areas of representatives of local business - agricultural institutions, brewery, hotels, private business tourism destination, as well as schools and hospitals. In the above-mentioned Agreement of Cooperation and Collaboration activities are planned to promote sustainable development activity areas, namely:

- Assistance in solving the problems of nature protection and recovery of lost species in the territory of Oka Biosphere Reserve;
- Facilitate the organization and conduct of basic and applied research works in the field of environmental protection and sustainable natural resources, the organization of interaction with institutions, research organizations of the Russian Academy of Sciences;
- Creation of a unified information system and database resources sustainable development;
- The integration of the results of ongoing projects and research by implementing the recommendations in the activities of the participants and Agreement taking into account the recommendations developed during the preparation of development projects;
- The promotion of environmental education, development and introduction of innovative educational technologies in the field of nature and sustainable environmental management, including distance training, - improving the quality of training and practical orientation education of pupils and students;
- Formation of a professional orientation of the system in an environment of preschool, and additional schooling, organization of scientific-practical conferences, forums, competitions, excursions, etc .;

### **III. Advisory Board noted that the information on implementation of development function of biosphere reserve is not enough detailed.**

#### **Response**

It is proposed to further information on the implementation of the function the development of the biosphere reserve: development function includes assistance at the local level economic development which is sustainable in the cultural, socially and environmentally.

#### ***Cultural development***

The prevailing trend of the past 10 years is to increase the flow of tourists visiting the biosphere reserve (increase flow 3 times the annual number of reported organized tourists 12,000 people), which is associated with the development of appropriate infrastructure: the completion of the reconstruction of the Museum of Nature, in 2011 the construction of the visitor center, the development of new tourist routes, as well as working with the media.

Tourism is developed in the following areas:

- Excursion activity. Throughout the year, a 1.5 hour guided tour of "Introduction to the reserve" operates within the biosphere reserve landfill. It includes - a story about the reserve, visit bison nursery, nursery of rare species of cranes, visiting the ruins of the pre-revolutionary glass factory of Russian-Belgian Society, visit the Museum of Nature.
- Activities of the visitor center and museum. Natural History Museum was established in 1937, renovated in 1998-2004. The visitor center was built in 2011. The museum and visitor center form a single complex equipped with modern appliances: TVs, a large interactive screen, a projector, a series of showcases with animals equipped with an audio speaker. Guided tours is held constantly. Every year the museum is visited by about 4,000 people in the conference hall hosts conferences on environmental topics with students and teachers. In the visitor center there are several clubs for the local children. For example, the Children's Environmental Theatre "Blue Bird".
- Environmental festivals and competitions. Since 1995, the reserve annually participates actively in the international environmental campaign "March of parks", in which you are working on landscaping,

various competitions - competitions of drawings, literary works, photographs, and others. Annually since 2002 holiday "Crane Day" in the Oka Reserve in mid-September passes.

**Social development**

There are some undoubted benefits for local residents living in the vicinity of the Biosphere Reserve, namely the protection of major land and water resources, more stable and diverse economic base, additional employment opportunities, the opportunity to participate in decision-making on land use, reduction of conflicts with the administration of the protected area and interest groups, the ability to maintain existing traditions and way of life and a healthy environment at the moment and in the future. In addition, developing small private business of the local population for the sale of environmental literature, photographs, paintings preserve landscapes, clay toys Local communities use the location advantage near the reserve for promotional purposes (the sale of real estate, agricultural products (especially honey). The reserve generates 120-130 jobs at the local level. The administration of the reserve provides employees, pensioners and citizens living within the boundaries of cooperation zone pass to visit the hunting and fishing grounds without payment. A reserve provides wood at discounted prices to local residents who have stove heating. The increase in the market value of real estate in towns within the biosphere reserve and its borders, while maintaining the basic indicators of biodiversity, are sufficient indicators of sustainable development.

**Environmental development**

Biosphere Reserve supports the study of ecological processes and dynamics of biological diversity. It is an area that allows to obtain an expanding database to construct new hypotheses and experiments. Additionally biosphere reserve provides long-term preservation of permanent observation plots and monitoring that allows to identify long-term trends in comparison with the short-term fluctuations that may be caused by climate change or annual water regime. Biosphere reserves provide opportunities for interdisciplinary research, comparative study and exchange of information. Contracts on joint study of the territory and objects reserve the Ryazan State Agricultural Academy, Ryazan State University, the Institute of Biology of Inland Waters and other organization are concluded. The research results are presented in the 35 volumes of the Proceedings of the reserve, as well as in scientific journals.

**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.

**• Recommendation**  
Sufficient resources should be made available to ensure proper operation of the reserve and continued scientific research

**Response**  
Currently the state allocates sufficient resources to ensure proper operation of the reserve and continued research.

a) In 2016 during the ongoing inventory of biota were found 14 new species for reserve:

Taxon	Species
<i>Basidiomycetes</i>	Ramariopsis crocea (Pers.) Corner
	Jnocybe calospora Quel.
	Tephrocybe rancida (Fr.) Donk

	<i>Plicatura nivea</i> (Sommerf.) P. Karst.
	<i>Geastrum triplex</i> Jungh.
<i>Coleoptera</i>	<i>Hydroporus palustris</i> (Linnaeus, 1761)
	<i>Hydroporus tristis</i> (Paykull, 1798)
	<i>Hydroporus neglectus</i> Schaum, 1845
	<i>Hydroporus striola</i> (Gyllenhal, 1826)
	<i>Hydroporus fuscipennis</i> Schaum, 1868
	<i>Berosus signaticollis</i> (Charpentier, 1825)
<i>Mollusca</i>	<i>Oxyloma pfeifferi</i> (Rossmassler, 1835)
<i>Odonata</i>	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i> (Brulle, 1832)
<i>Hirudinea</i>	<i>Erpobdella nigricollis</i> (Brandes, 1899)

b) In this year two volumes of Proceedings of the reserve were published: “Russian desman in the Oka basin” and “Ecology of Kingfisher in the southern Meshchera”

c) We have continued researches of the fish population and their food supply (hydrobionts) of reserve lakes in connection with invasion of invaders.

d) We have continued researches of biology, ways of migration of gray cranes. According to the agreement with the Jerusalem university 13 gray cranes in the Oka wildlife reserve of GPS trackers with GSM transmitters are marked.

f) The scientific component has continued to develop at both nurseries at Reserve - bison and cranes. On crane nursery studying of a shell of eggs of cranes as indicator of conditions of keeping of birds in bondage is begun. It is let out in the nature 13 Siberian cranes (Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve).

On bison nursery for the first time samples of blood were analyzed on 14 infectious diseases.

j) Series of long-term supervision on 38 positions have been still conducted.

**• Recommendation**

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain should be continued and ways of mitigating the adverse effect of the drainage canal explored.

**Response**

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain have been continued and the impact of negative factors are also studied. The book “Russian desman in the Oka basin” was published in 2016.

**• Recommendation**

In the Lopata zone, the reserve should be extended south-eastward as far as the river Pra in order to include some typical water meadow not yet represented in the reserve, a number of oxbows and a portion of the river Oka bank

**Response**

In the Lopata zone the reserve isn't extended south-eastward to include some typical water meadow because not all shareholders agreed to give the shares and continue them to use as haying areas.

**• Recommendation**

Effort should be made to encourage the handover to Oka reserve of the hay meadows located on the left bank of the Pra to the south of grid squares 169 to 171 in the central forest section

**Response**

The handover to Oka National Reserve of the hay meadows located on the left bank of the Pra to the south of grid squares 169 to 171 in the central forest section isn't carried out. Currently purposeful work on preparation of documents for transfer of the marked area is conducted.

**• Recommendation**

Increase the level of information, environmental education outreach

**Response**

Condition is satisfied The level of environmental education and information outreach: every year about 9,000 people attend Reserve, more than 500 excursions organized by the ecological paths, nursery of rare species of cranes and bison nursery, Museum of Nature. In 2016 annual events Day birds (April), Day a crane (October), Shrovetide (February) of an ecological orientation with attraction of local population, school students of Ryazan city, tourists are held. In a newly opened Center of ecological information and education (Visit Center) hosts conferences with students, concerts ecological orientation, workshops with teachers and other events (total 5 conferences and workshops in 2016 year). Also, there the art exhibition and photo-exhibition of local artists devoted to Meshchera's nature. Those interested persons can purchase these works.

**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.

See above for the change in the management of reserve, intake the local population

**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.

See above details of any changes to the boundaries of the Okskiy reserve and fig.1

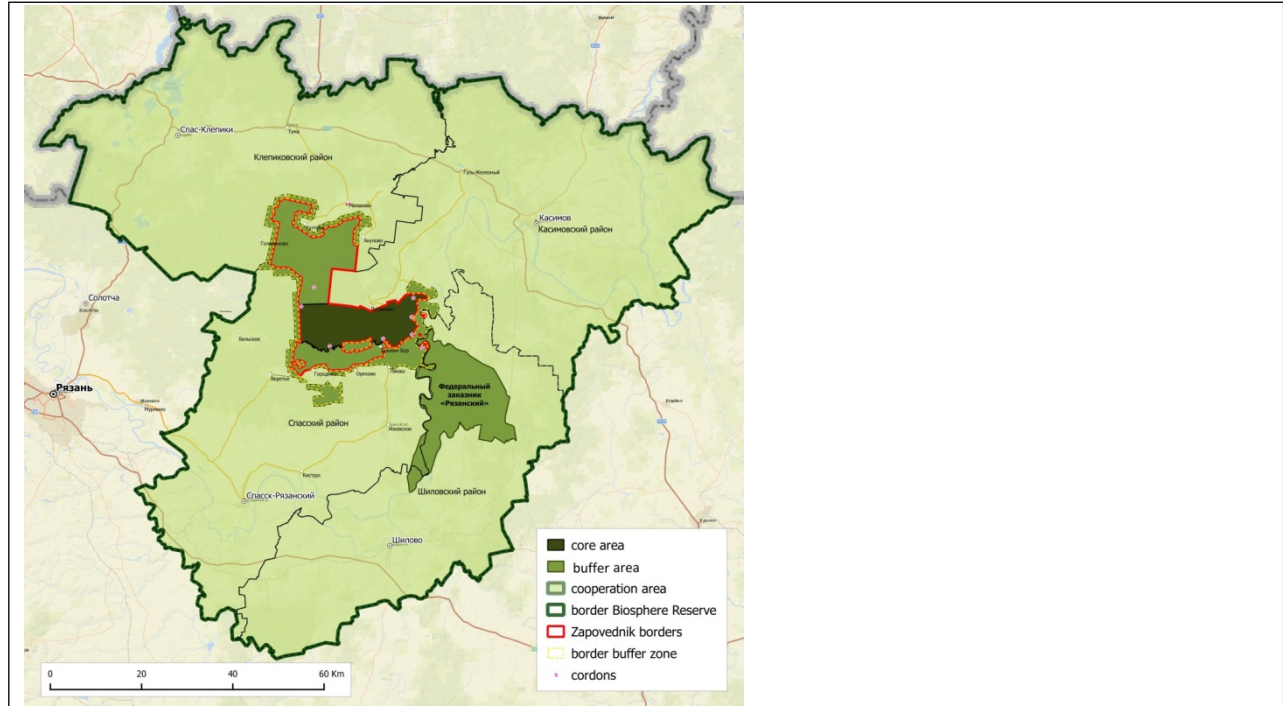


Fig.1. Modern borders of the Okskiy reserve

**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.

The European Diploma’s logo was used by us in all presentations about the reserve. The logo is placed on our many notices and documents. The logo is on office building of the reserve and in a director's room. Thanks to promotion of an ecological way of life people want to be near the nature at the most important moments of the life (fig.2.)



Fig.2. Wedding in a zone of cooperation of the reserve

**45. RUSSIAN FEDERATION - TSENTRALNO-CHERNOZEMNY BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

**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.



There were no conditions, only recommendations were attached to the renewal of the Diploma in 2008 (see below).

**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.

The following recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma were given in 2008:

1. provide sufficient resources to ensure proper functioning of the reserve. Financial support is needed to carry out basic research and establish infrastructure for the development of ecological education, as well as for strengthening the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve protection capacity;
2. carry on systematic efforts to extend all the Reserve territories, especially their buffer zones and to establish and/or restore ecological corridors between these territories;
3. continue efforts to search for new valuable steppe territories which could be joined to Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve or constitute stepping stones or ecological corridors between the existing territories of the reserve;
4. encourage further co-operation projects with international participation – such as the “Yaroslavna” project – in the sphere of nature and landscape conservation and sustainable development;
5. continue work on the optimisation of territory of the Belogorye Biosphere Reserve. This reserve might be expanded through incorporation of new steppe ecosystems, which would strengthen the interest of the diploma-holding area. Possibly consider the extension of the European Diploma to the Belogorye Reserve.

In accordance with these items, the Zapovednik’s administration emphasizes the following:

1. In 2016 are acquired the machinery and equipment:

- Car UAZ 2217 – 2,
- Canon iR 2520 - 1 multi-function printer,
- The laptop of Lenovo – 1,
- The Nikon field-glass – 1,
- The video camera digital Panasonic – 1,
- The Canon copier – 1,
- The personal computer – 1,
- The color OKI laser printer – 1,
- A phototrap – 1,
- The psychrometric box – 1,
- Car UAZ 390395 – 1,
- The Canon SLR camera – 1,
- A galogenovy lamp – 1,
- A freezing chamber – 1,
- The Epson scanner – 1,

- The smartphone – 2,
- Router-1.

2. In 2016 the work has been continued on creation of a buffer zone of Poima Psla and Zorinsky sections of the Zapovednik. By present time Regulations about a buffer zone are developed and the approval of a part of land users is received. Until the end of 2016 all materials on creation of a buffer zone of these sections of the reserve will be directed to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Russian Federation.

3. In 2016 the state environmental assessment of design materials on creation of the biosphere range "Steppe" was carried out, now all materials are transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Russian Federation.

4. Since 2010 the Zapovednik is involved in the Steppe Project which is financed by international organizations UNDP and GEF as well as by Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of RF "Improving the coverage and management efficiency of protected areas in the steppe biome of Russia". Only 4 zapovedniks throughout Russia have been chosen as pilot territories for this project.

5. The administration of the reserve "Belogorie" itself plans to carry out works on optimization of the territory.

**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.

Unlike last year, in 2016 all planned areas were mown on the territory of two sites of the Reserve. It was made with the help of a new partner of the Reserve with the assistance of the Administration of the Kursk region.

The number of the staff did not change, the common financing remained practically at the previous level.

**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 of the borders of the Reserve took place in 2015.

**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.

In 2016 actions were continued for reintroduction of steppe marmots (*Marmota bobac*) on a pasture of the Streletsky site of the TsChZ within the performance of the works according to Steppe project UNDP/GEF/Ministry of Natural Resources RF.

The administration of the Reserve began to work on the conclusion of contracts on mutually beneficial cooperation with administrations of the local municipalities adjoining six sites of the Reserve.

In July 18-21, 2016 (a year before the planned terms) the Reserve was visited by the expert of the Council of Europe Mr. Herve Lethier for on-the-spot appraisal. He visited 4 sites of TsChZ (Streletsky, Kazatsky, Bukreevy Barmy, Barkalovka) and the planned biosphere range "Steppe".

#### **46. SLOVAK REPUBLIC - DOBROČSKÝ NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

##### **1. Conditions**

The following condition is determined by the resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11:

- *Pursue the process of transforming anthropogenic forests into semi-natural forests, mainly in the buffer zone of the Dobročský prales National Nature Reserve, in compliance with the management plan.*

Process of **transforming anthropogenic forest in the buffer zone (B zone) of the Dobročský prales National Nature Reserve (hereafter “Dobročský prales NNR”)** continued in the reporting period by preferential calamity wood processing: wind calamity in a volume of 96 m<sup>3</sup>, bark beetle calamity in a volume of 1,459 m<sup>3</sup>. Other interventions in this area have not been implemented.

In the surrounding forest stands, outside of the protected area, **prescribed rehabilitation and educational interventions were carried out** in accordance with the valid Forest Management Plan (prepared and approved for years 2016-2025 for the Dobroč forest unit) as well as the necessary sanitation measures under the current status of the forest stands with an occurrence of the bark beetle calamity and other types of calamity.

## 2. Recommendations

Two recommendations have been set up by the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11:

*1. Promote awareness-raising activities, mainly:*

*-updating the exhibition on the Dobročský prales NNR in the Pred Skalickou cottage;*

*-in co-operation with the forestry authorities, installing the information point on the Dobročský prales NNR in the Forestry Museum in the Vydrovská valley, near Čierny Balog.*

With respect to the first part of the recommendation the exhibition in the Pred Skalickou cottage was supplemented by the lacking **publications and promotional materials made in last years in Slovak and English versions: a video film about the Dobročský prales NNR and information leaflets** in Slovak and also English language. The cottage was subject of standard technical maintenance.

With respect to the second part of the recommendation there was carried out the **routine maintenance of the “torso of the Dobročská jedľa” as well as in close proximity of installed information points** in the open air forestry museum. The points inform visitors about the largest silver fir (*Abies alba*) in the primeval forest called “Dobročská jedľa” and give basic information on the Dobročský prales NNR.

The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic ensured by distribution of the newest information leaflets about the Dobročský prales NNR in A3 format and the production of a video film “Dobročský prales – Chrám prírody” (Dobročský prales Primeval forest – Nature Cathedral), which were funded from the Swiss financial mechanism (project Development of nature conservation and protected areas in the Slovak Carpathians). Both materials are in Slovak and English versions.

The basic information about the Dobročský prales NNR is available for visitors in the **open air forestry museum in the Vydrovska Valley in its information centre** at the start of “Chodník lesného času”, at a stop by the torso of the Dobročská jedľa and also on websites of relevant organizations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.chkopolana.eu/news/narodna-prirodna-rezervacia-dobroccky-prales/>;  
<http://www.lesy.sk/showdoc.do?docid=2693>; [www.pralesy.sk](http://www.pralesy.sk); <http://www.ciernybalog.sk/dobroccky-prales.phtml?id3=83412>; <http://vydra.sk/>;  
<http://www.huculskamagistrala.sk/externe/klaster/home.nsf/page/0be66ae90b0a7bd4c1257baa002a74d9?OpenDocument>;  
[http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2013/enviro3/22\\_ste.pdf](http://www.enviromagazin.sk/enviro2013/enviro3/22_ste.pdf); <http://slovakia.travel/dobroccky-prales>;  
<http://horehronie.sk/sk/atrckcie/prirodne-zaujímavosti/dobroccky-prales/>;  
<http://www.muranskapanina.com/zaujímavosti-uzemia/priroda/npr-dobroccky-prales/>

Distribution of the information leaflets about the Dobročský prales NNR is carried out by the civic association Vydra, the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic, its branch Čierny Balog, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area.

**2. Implement other activities listed in the management plan, particularly research and monitoring.**

**Monitoring of the status of the territory indicate no significant changes** in comparison with the previous period. Monitoring the **number of visitors indicates a slight growth.**

The occurrence of invasive alien plants has not been recorded.

The results of occurrence of fungi research including those of typical native and undisturbed forest (doc. Ing. Vladimír Kunca, PhD., Technical University in Zvolen, 2014) have not been published yet. But in the reporting period Technical University in Zvolen (doc. Ing. Vladimír Kunca, PhD., Technical University in Zvolen) carried out **research on the abundance of fruiting bodies of fungi** with emphasis on the presence and location of dead fir wood in various stages of decomposition for intentions of further research and tried to find the missing mushroom *Pseudorhizina undulata* in Slovakia. During that visit only normal and expected fruiting bodies of fungi species were recorded, *Pseudorhizina undulata* was not found.

The **partial zoological research in the core of the forest focused on invertebrates continued** (led by Ing. Peter Potocký, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic - Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area).

In the reporting period the results of research Faculty of Forestry in Zvolen (prof. Ing. Milan Saniga, DrSc.) were processed in a **scientific publication** which analyzes changes in tree species composition and diameter structure (core zone of primeval forest with an area of 49.98 hectares) and analyzes the structure, texture and regenerative processes on permanent research plots (area of 6.25 hectares) for the period 1978-2015. The scientific monograph was devoted to prof. dr. h. c. Ing. Štefan Korpeľ, DrSc. who was nearly 90 year old and was a Nestor of research of Slovak primeval forests.

**Research results as follow-up of the "Cryptogam symposium on natural beech fires in Slovakia, 2011"** organized by the Institute of Botany Slovak Academy of Sciences, **were published in 2016** in the scientific publication about the diversity of wood-inhabiting fungi and lichens.

The maintenance of the information objects was ensured by the area manager and Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area.

**3. Local management**

**In Zone A (the core zone)** of the Dobročský prales NNR, which is a fragment of the original ecosystem of the Carpathian natural forest, **only natural processes** characteristic for climax forest stage are still ongoing.

Forest manager and administrator of the territory - the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic (its branch Čierny Balog) did not notice any intentional anthropic interference in reported period. In Zone A they do not register any calamity, although recently observed dieback of spruce due to bark beetles attack also in younger age classes, but this is considered to a natural development. Mentioned facts confirm that in primeval forest communities there are natural processes and this part of protected area could be evaluated as a highly stable and favorable condition of habitats.

Managing interventions in **Zone B (buffer zone – forests altered with forestry activities)** were **focused on calamity wood processing: wind calamity in a volume of 96 m<sup>3</sup>, bark beetle calamity in a volume of 1,459 m<sup>3</sup>** in the reported period. Any other intentional interventions in this part of NNR have not been implemented.

In surrounding forests outside protected areas were carried prescribed renewal and educative interventions under the valid Forest Management Plan for forest unit Dobroč. It was prepared in cooperation with the Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area and approved for the years 2016-2025. Planned forestry interventions in Zone A (fifth level of protection) remain fully respecting the mode "without intervention". In zone B (fourth level of protection) were proposed measures in order as far as possible reduce the effects of anthropogenic activities from the surrounding commercial forests to Zone A, to ensure the smooth functioning of the climax ecosystems stages, to increase gradually the ecological stability of forests (especially in parts of higher representation of non-original habitat of spruce). These functions will be provided by the gradual modification of tree species composition in favor of habitats suitable tree species, encouraging natural regeneration, keeping dead wood, the support of deciduous trees and fir. In parts with favorable structure will not be conducted any interventions. Such proposed management enables the differentiation of vegetation and creates conditions for a gradual return to the functioning of natural processes.

#### 4. Borders

During the reporting period there were **no changes in borders** of the Dobročský prales NNR.

#### 5. Other information

**The Dobročský prales NNR was visited by 14 excursions with a total of 289 experts and guests.** The State Forest Enterprise, Čierny Balog Branch guided 6 groups with a total of 214 experts. Department of Silviculture of the Faculty of Forestry, Technical University in Zvolen guided 4 visits for 49 experts (students of UR Krakow, doctoral students and teaching staff of LF in Zagreb, foresters from ANW Saxony, Baden-Baden). Department of Applied Ecology of the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences in Zvolen organized one excursion to one expert. The representatives of the Faculty of Forestry of Technical University in Zvolen accompanied one group of 10 experts. Administration of the PLA Polana provided 1 tour for an integrated group of visitors with an interest in forests (11 adults, 3 children) and 1 excursion to one expert in forestry.

**Within the protection zone of the Dobročský prales NNR there were 20 groups (with 311 visitors)** accompanied by a civic association "VYDRA - rural development activity". They consisted of the 79 primary school pupils (4 groups), 53 Swedish students (2 groups), 37 German students (one group), 39 members of the Club of Slovak tourists from Rimavská Sobota (1 group), 9 participants of recording of the video-invitation for guided tours into the primeval forest (1 group) and 94 individual visitors (11 groups).

The highest attendance of the area was in the months from May till August 2016.

In the context of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of European Union the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic was planning (for 10<sup>th</sup> till 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016) an international event – Meeting of the EU Nature and Biodiversity Directors including a visit of the Dobročský prales NNR organized by the Administration of the Poľana Protected Landscape Area).

The civic association "VYDRA" released a DVD with video-invitations of its entertainment and educational programs, and a part of the DVD is dedicated to the excursion with a guide into the Dobročský prales NNR organized by "VYDRA". Filming took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 and was attended by 9 people. DVD with video invitations were sent out in January 2016 to 1,900 primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. Videos are placed on a new Youtube channel "Vydrovská Valley": <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UUZpaqVRM5cE9JHHkjbFEx3Q>. Video-invitation "Excursion to Dobročský prales, primeval forest" has an address <https://youtu.be/eAOxG4xM9jE>.

**Nature trail "To Dobročský prales, primeval forest"**, which was designed in collaboration with site managers (State Forest Enterprise) **was successfully completed**. It starts in the parking lot at the

bus stop "Drábsko, Tlstý javor" near the state route Hriňová - Brezno than follows the forest road to the buffer zone of the Dobročský prales primeval forest NNR. Through the protection zone is heading to the border of the protected area (primeval forest), but does not directly interfere to it. The trail includes **7 information panels**. Funding for this activity was implemented within already mentioned –project Development of nature conservation and protected areas in the Slovak Carpathians).

**Published scientific works:**

PAROBAKOVÁ, Z. - SANIGA M. - PITTNER, J. - KUCBEL, S. - JALOVIAR, P., 2016: The Structure, Growing, Stock Distribution, Disturbance Regime and Regeneration Processes of Virgin Forest Dobroč (Study Time). Faculty of Forestry, 59 p.

URBAN, P., (on-line). 2015: History of nature protection in Poľana mts. (Central Slovakia) – part 1. (from ancient times to the designation of biosphere reserve). Quaestiones rerum naturalium, Vol. 2, No. 2, Faculty of Natural Sciences UMB in Banská Bystrica, pp. 8 – 89. <https://www.fpv.umb.sk/katedry/katedra-biologie-a-ekologie/veda-a-vyskum/casopis-quaestiones-rerum-naturalium/archiv.html>

ADAMČÍK, S. - AUDE, E. - BASSLER, C. - CHRISTENSEN, M. - VAN DORT, K. - FRITZ, Ö. - GLEJDURA, S. - HEILMANN-CLAUSEN, J. - HOLEC, J. - JANČOVIČOVÁ, S. – KUNC, V. - LACKOVIČOVÁ, A. – LUTHI, M. - ODOR, P. 2016: Fungi and lichens recorded during the Cryptogam Symposium on Natural Beech Forests, 2011. Slovakia Czech Mycology, 68 (1). pp. 1-40.

## 6. An influence of European Diploma award on the Protected Area

Fulfilling the conditions and recommendations contained in the Resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma for the Dobročský prales NNR **has a positive impact on the protected area**. This is confirmed by the long-term interest of scientific and educational institutions in the area, not only from Slovakia but also from abroad. Significant is also the number of students, especially from universities wishing to write about this area in their diploma thesis and dissertations.

The impact is also visible thanks to implementation of above mention Swiss-Slovak Cooperation project, the information is provided also in the new nature trail "To Dobročský prales, primeval forest".

It increases the responsibility of the administrator and forest manager for the implementation of the measures proposed in the management of forest in protection zone of Dobročský prales NNR (zone B) resulting from the Management plan for the protected areas.

## 47. SLOVAK REPUBLIC – POLONINY NATIONAL PARK

### 1. Conditions:

Resolution No(2012)19 contains 5 conditions

#### ***Condition No. 1: Finalise and adopt the management plan for the park within two years of the renewal***

In the referred period the SNC – Poloniny National Park Administration prepared a proposal of the **Management Plan for the Poloniny National Park for 2017 – 2026** („the Poloniny NP Management Plan“). The local community was involved into the preparatory process. And the result of the discussion is included in the Action plan (e.g. Annex 6.6.17 to the Poloniny NP Management Plan.

The Poloniny NP Management plan is the official documentation according to the § 54 of Act No 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended (hereinafter the “Act No 543/2002 Coll.”). Its structure is provided in the Appendix 18 of the Order of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic No 24/2003 Coll. as amended. The MoE in cooperation with the District Office Prešov and the SNC realized the whole process of public hearing and commenting of the document in the

way that more relevant subjects could comment on the draft. After all discussions the document was approved by the MoE and sent for cross-sectoral commenting procedure. The Poloniny NP Management Plan was **finally approved by the Government of Slovak Republic on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**. The English translation of the Document and its Annex 6.6.17 is attached to the report, the other relevant annexes will be provided by the end of 2016. In the Poloniny NP Management Plan there are long-term and operational objectives set up as well as measures, responsible bodies and expected financial resources. Thanks to the preparatory and consultation process the document was accepted by local stakeholders also as a basis for future common projects (to be financed from the EU Structural Funds).

***Condition No. 2: Start work on devising a new blueprint for forestry and hunting management in the diploma-holding area, taking greater account of the biological imperatives dictated by its European significance, within one year of the renewal. The national authorities shall supply a strategic plan for the sustainable development of the woodland during the next period of validity of the diploma and inform the Group of Specialists on the Diploma each year of the progress made. This blueprint shall include revision of the current hunting allocation in the diploma-holding area, ensuring that the functional units each cover a surface area of 3 000 to 4 000 hectares, consistent with the biology of large herbivores.***

#### **Forest management:**

The whole area of the Poloniny NP is protected by the 3rd level of protection according to Act No 543/2002 Coll., e.g. there are specific restrictions and regulations applied, including the forest management. In general clear cutting is eligible only in a limited scale and under specifically listed conditions, namely: in pine, poplar, willow and robinia forest stands; plantages for energetic purposes and in the process of forest reconstruction. These types of the forest cover do not occur in the Poloniny NP therefore clear cutting is not used in that area.

Forest categorization is in accordance with the approved **Forest Maintenance Plans** (valid for 10 year period) along with the prescribed measures, methods and models. Shelterwood system, which was applied in the area also before the declaration of national park, is still applied. From the esthetical point of view this is not suitable method for national park.

The Poloniny NP Management Plan modifies the requirements to change the current management. It mainly refers to the area of the Slovak part of “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany” World Heritage Property and its buffer zone. Based on the definition of primeval forest there were not economic interventions in the area of primeval forests and remains of primeval forests. Natural forests (primeval forests and remains of primeval forests) in Slovakia were identified based on the complex spatial inventory. To preserve primeval forests and remains of primeval forests it is necessary to exclude all anthropogenic interventions which could influence its natural development. Non-intervention regime without any management measures, including exclusion of measures associated with treatment or rehabilitation of calamity, is applied only in the 5th level of protection. In those forests the activities of security service and health supervision are allowed, as well as implementation of research and scientific or experiential tourism. For this purpose, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 the Borsukov vrch Nature Reserve was designated on the state owned land. The reserve connects identified primeval forests and remains of primeval forests in the area of the Poloniny NP. Together with localities of natural forests (primeval forests) in Poland and Ukraine, it creates protected area of remarkable size and quality characteristics.

After designation of the Borsukov Vrch Natural Reserve, SNC – Administration of the Poloniny NP asked the District Office Prešov to change forests stands in the Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve from commercial forests into special purpose forests.. This process is not finished yet, therefore the **structure of forests according forest categories is stated in the following table:**

Forest category	Surface area until 2014 (in %)	Surface area after the renewal in 2014 (in %)	Surface area of the Natural Reserve "Borsukov Vrch" (in %)
Commercial forests	17,751.68 ha (65.23 %)	17,599.04 ha (64.59 %)	17,527.20 ha (64.32 %)
Special purpose forests	7,330.16 ha (26.94 %)	7,630.43 ha (28.00 %)	7,702.27 ha (28.27 %)
Protective forests	2,131.17 ha (7.83 %)	2,018.22 ha (7.41 %)	2,018.22 ha (7.41 %)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27,213.01 ha (100 %)</b>	<b>27,247.69 ha (100 %)</b>	<b>27,247.69 ha (100 %)</b>

### Game management:

The positive fact is that the **outcome of negotiations with local stakeholders is involvement of the local hunters and hunting organizations**. They want to be involved in the management of large carnivores, management of ungulates and care about them. Those activities are included in the Action Plan as it follows:

- **Twice a year, conduct a census of large carnivores** in the presence of nature conservation, local hunters and foresters. To eliminate duplication of census it is necessary that each participant is equipped with a camera and a specific subject of the delivery on the day of census. Successful management of large carnivores is possible only on condition that the real number of animals is known.
- **Once a year, control of antlers found in a given year** in the territory of the NP Poloniny. Based on the results of the control the trend of the population of deer will be determined. According the size and quality of antlers the idea of cynegetic reserve can be implemented better. The idea shows the need to primarily hunt the subspecies *Cervus elaphus hippelaphus* and preserve the individuals of *Cervus elaphus montanus*. The quality status of deer population is also a good indicator of wolf population quality.
- Local Hunters want that the **local hunting organizations will take over the care and management of wild European bisons (*Bison bonasus*), however this as well as previous points depend on the financial support**.

Another important step is **strengthening a cooperation** between the SNC – Administration of the Poloniny NP and the District Hunting Chamber in Humenne on education of professional hunters through various seminars, training courses and practical demonstrations. One employee of Poloniny NP Administration in the Advisory Board for the breeding area Poloniny Carpathians (body that decides on hunting management in the breeding area) so the representative of the Poloniny NP is entitled to vote and make suggestions for change in management measures, which means that he can influence the course of hunting in the area.

***Condition No. 3: Create a functional network of protected areas during the next period of validity, meeting international standards in this area and complying with the national Law on Nature and Landscape Protection (notably sections 28 and 30).***

As already mentioned **the whole area of the Poloniny NP is protected by the 3rd level** of protection according to the Act 543/2002 Coll. except for ature reserves, national nature reserves etc. have higher level of protection. There were several proposals on creation of natural reserves prepared and negotiated but without a complete support of stakeholders which is irremissible in accordance with the valid Act 543/2002 Coll. In the previous years there were several attempts to designate more nature reserves within the Poloniny NP but they were not succesfull mainly due to the deep mistrust of the local population towards nature conservation bodies.



Changed legal framework and improved communication led to the already mentioned proposal to designate Borsukov Vrch Nature Reserve . This nature reserve was designated on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 by the Governmental Decree No. 6/2016 (see <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2016/6/20160101>). Its area is 146,79 ha and it is protected by the highest 5th level of protection in accordance with the Act. No. 543/2002 Coll. The percentage of strictly protected areas has increased and now it is 8,16 % of the area of the Poloniny NP.

Within the Poloniny NP Management Plan an ecological-functional area (hereinafter EFA) No. 1b was defined. It includes forest stands outside existing nature reserves, which are owned or managed by non-state owners, and which are part of the component Stuzica-Bukovské vrchy of the „Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forest of Germany“ World Heritage Site. These forest stands are still in less strictly protected 3th level of protection in accordance of the Act. no. 543/2002 Coll. During the negotiations of the Poloniny NP Management Plan with land-owners and land-users they gave a preliminary consent to define EFA No. 1b and at the same time consent with non-intervention regime, but with a condition, that the state will compensate detriment. The way of compensation is subject to further negotiation.

***Condition No. 4: Pursue the steps taken to purchase private forests and draw up a future purchasing plan with specific objectives, indicating the funding to be assigned to this purpose each year.***

The purchase of land from private owners is only one of the possibilities how to maintain suitable management of the area. Other instituted instruments to rearrange relations in the protected areas are lease, exchange of land, contractory measures and financial compensation. The amendment of Act No. 543/2002 Coll. effective from 1st January 2014 has also brought the obligation to prepare the **list of lands eligible for land exchange, lease or purchase and contractual management** until 30th June each year (§ 61.3 – see in the already mentioned document 2). In accordance with the aforementioned provision, the SNC created such a list also for the territory of the Poloniny NP. The list shall be negotiated by the SNC with the owners.

As already mention in the Condition No 1 the SNC elaborated an official **calculation of leasing amount for different private (non-state) owners**. That is another important document for negotiations with the land owners. Based on this document and future discussions and change of their thinking and expectations, negotiations on compensations (or land loaning) is going on – mentioned in condition no. 3.

***Condition No. 5: Set up a scientific programme inventorying and monitoring the large carnivore populations in the diploma-holding area; the national authorities shall submit the scientific protocol for that programme for opinion to the Group of Specialists on the Diploma within one year of the renewal.***

The SNC implements **project aimed at large carnivores** and has informed the Council of Europe about these in its annual reports. Details on the Project is in the document 7 “LARGE CARNIVORES”<sup>2</sup>, the list of relevant projects, research studies and publication is in the document 8 “RESEARCH\_Poloniny”<sup>2</sup>. Study on ethology of the brown bear population in Slovakia, study on evaluation of the size of the brown bear, study on healthy conditions of the brown bear population and study on complex identification of the population of large carnivores and a wild cat in Slovakia already resulted in preliminary quantity/quality data on above species.

There are 2 important issues concerning the wolf: since 2014 it is fully protected in the area. In beginning of 2016 the **Management plan for the wolf at national level**<sup>3</sup> was approved by the MoE. **This document is the official documentation** according to the § 54 of Act No 543/2002 Coll and as such **binding for the MoE and its organizations as well as for the management of the species**

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.sopsr.sk/european\\_diploma\\_poloniny/](http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sopsr.sk/web/?cl=30>

**nation-wide.** It was developed in cooperation with the MoA, the National Forestry Centre, the Technical University in Zvolen, University of the Veterinary Medicine Košice and involved NGOs and is widely accepted by the public.

Similarly, **management plan for brown bear has been completed to be submitted to the MoE** for the further consultations (first of all to the Group of Experts for Large Carnivores and secondly to the internal consultation within the MoE). It is to complete already existing procedure – guidance for regulatory hunting brown bear. It is necessary to stress that this species has not been hunt for long period (no permission issued). The Poloniny NP Administration **cooperates with the Nature Conservancy Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, Poland.** As part of this co-operation, the parties shall mutually exchange position data of two bears from Poland, currently living in the Poloniny NP, remotely monitored by GPS and GSM technology.

Link to the Management Plan: <http://www.uschovna.cz/zasilka/LI3KRZ9JMNRCINKU-TFN>

## 2. Recommendations

Resolution No(2012)19 contains 7 recommendations

***Recommendation No. 1: Give the management of the diploma-holding area greater responsibility for forestry and hunting matters and involve it in the corresponding decision-making process***

Division of the competencies for the management of protected areas among different ministries is model commonly used also in other countries which are members of the Council of Europe. **Competencies of relevant ministries are based in the “Competency Act”** adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic.

Competencies with respect to the nature protection issues as well as forestry, hunting, fishing, etc. are divided to the administration bodies (ministries, district offices) and other institutions (such as the SNC). The **Poloniny NP Administration is therefore only part of the relevant institutional framework.** Along with the professional employees there is a network of voluntary guards – rangers (specifically for nature, forestry, hunting, fishing) appointed according to the respective legal acts (conditions, rights and responsibilities, training, period etc.). In the Poloniny NP there are **7 voluntary nature guards.** According to the Act No 274/2009 Coll., there is an obligation of one person of the **hunting guard for each 500 ha of the hunting district.**

Responsibilities of the SNC (including its unit - the Poloniny NP Administration) have been significantly strengthened in the amendment to the Act No. 543/2002 Coll. New rights and obligations have been introduced significantly improving the competence and powers of the organization. The most important one are listed in the § 65a of the Act No 543/2002 Coll. (e.g. signed loan agreements with the land-owners, comment the process of preparation of forestry management plans and providing data for their preparation).

In addition to this, an inter-ministerial agreement between the MoE and the MoA was signed in February 2015 aimed at the fulfilment of obligations concerning the UNESCO convention and the European Diploma (original in Slovak language and translation into English is in the document 9\_AGREEMENT\_MoA\_MoE<sup>4</sup>).

***Recommendation No. 2: Consider the signature of a simplified agreement between the bodies directly responsible for managing the protected areas on the borders of the three neighbouring countries (Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine), based on the programming of joint activities;***

**Fulfilled – a trilateral agreement** (copy in the document “10a\_TRILATERAL AGREEMENT”<sup>3</sup>) was concluded on 15th November 2013, as part of the international Eastern Carpathian

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sopsr.sk/european\\_diploma\\_poloniny/](http://www.sopsr.sk/european_diploma_poloniny/)

Biosphere Reserve. The Steering Council of this biosphere reserve also includes the administrations of the relevant national parks and protected landscape areas; these jointly manage and coordinate cross-border activities within the scope of the Steering Council in the annual meetings. In the reported period there was **a meeting of the Steering Council in the Uzhankyi National Nature Park, Ukraine.**

Within the management of trilateral international protected area of the “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathian and Ancient Forests of Germany”, the trilateral co-operation continued especially with interchange of information and experience at the **Joint Management Committee session held on 26.-27 October 2015 in Snina, Slovakia.** During this session, the representatives of the competent ministries of Slovakia, Ukraine and Germany signed the document (attached as document “10b\_JOINT DECLARATION”<sup>3</sup>) the *Joint Declaration of Intent between the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic concerning the Cooperation on the Protection and Management of the Joint World Heritage property “Primeval Beech forests of the Carpathians (Slovak Republic and Ukraine) and the Ancient Beech forests of Germany (Germany)”*. In this document, the participants expressed their will to provide mutual support and cooperation concerning the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the Joint World Heritage property to future generations. Next upcoming meeting is planned for the beginning of 2017 in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine.

***Recommendation No. 3: pursue efforts to upgrade human resources, in particular by taking on more technical staff and wardens, and very substantially step up funding, at least doubling the annual ratio per hectare for the period of validity of the diploma.***

**The number of basic staff members increased from 12 persons in 2014 on 13 persons in 2015.**

Institutional financing of the administration which was assessed by the expert are only the part of financial sources which the Poloniny NP Administration has in disposal. Large amount of money are secured and provided via projects, grants and contributions from the MoE, Environmental fund etc. directly to the SNC or to the local stakeholders based on their requests.

As part of the project already started and financed from Norwegian funds via the Government Office of the Slovak Republic since **September 2015 there are 3 new positions** within the SNC, including the Poloniny NP Administration. **Another seasonal work position was established** at the information Centre of the Poloniny NP in Nová Sedlica. This person provides information about the Poloniny NP to the public, the tourists and the visitors of the area in the main touristic season.

Agenda of the Poloniny NP and its international commitments is tackled also by 2 experts implementing the Swiss project “Development of Nature Conservancy and Protected Areas in the Slovak Carpathians” (hereinafter “Swiss project”) as well as 1 coordinator of international cooperation. Agenda of all these employees is mostly aimed to the Poloniny NP region.

In addition to this, multiple activities shall be implemented within the area, outsourced by the SNC.

Other possibilities of employment of national park and its cooperating organizations is supported by the different projects (above mentioned Swiss and Norwegian Funds) where also excursions and visits in other countries took place to present possibilities of cooperation and support in the region.

As mentioned above there are **7 voluntary rangers**. Their activities are coordinated by the Poloniny NP Administration and District Office Prešov and they are mainly oriented on enforcement of the legislation (in the field).

***Recommendation No. 4: Give full protection to wolves and ban shooting them throughout the area of the national park.***

**Fulfilled – since 2014 wolf is fully protected species in the whole area of the Poloniny NP, its protective zone as well as in the adjacent Východné Karpaty Protected Landscape Area.** This is result of amendment (and compliance) of both the nature protection and hunting legislation, namely the Order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic No. 344/2009 Coll. executing the Hunting Act as amended and the Order of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic No 24/2003 Coll. implementing the Act No 543/2002 Coll. as amended. According to the official hunting statistic since 2013 no wolf was hunt in the Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area.

***Recommendation No. 5: Strongly consider the designation of a hunting district within the park as a strict cynegetic reserve.***

As already mentioned under the Condition No 2 hunting was subject to intensive consultation among MoE, MoA (and their institutions) and the Slovak Hunting Chamber. At their meeting with the 2 main local stakeholders on August 21st, 2015 it was concluded that **hunting management is in compliance with national legislation** and that the **Statute of the Poloninské Karpaty Hunting Area** (lastly updated in 2010) will be amended to more consider objectives of the Poloniny NP and to apply experience from the Poľana Protecting Hunting Area. The employee of NP Poloniny Administration became a member of Regional hunting board, where the opinion of the nature conservancy bodies are implemented.

***Recommendation No. 6: Pursue the efforts to restore buildings in the traditional regional style; the park might devise a charter of architectural rules for local authorities.***

Activities related to this recommendation undertaken by the municipalities, local companies and NGOs (tourist, culture and nature heritage) were supported from **Swiss project** mainly via small grant program. Similar support is planned also as part of the Norwegian project.

**Excursion** for relevant stakeholders was organized in October 2014 to the Switzerland to support the feeling of these responsible stakeholders how to promote their area and commonly support rural development. In 2015, the SNC motivated municipalities to increase their involvement in the **village renewal programme** (traditional instrument supported annually from the state budget). In previous reported period on 5th May 2015 a **seminar in the Poloniny NP was held to inform local stakeholders on the newly approved operational programs to use EU funds (2014-2020)**, namely the Rural development programme, Environment Quality operational programme, Poland - Slovakia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. This already resulted in submission of more application for financial support. On the basis of information obtained during this seminar some villages situated in the area of the Poloniny National Park or its buffer zone applied for financial support from the “Village renewal programme” and afterwards successfully realized these projects:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| -Village of Hostovice   | Restoration of graveyard in the Village of Hostovice  |
| -Village of Klenová     | Restoration of public space – creation of an infopoint about UNESCO World Heritage  |
| -Village of Kolbasov    | Restoration of public space in the centre of the Village of Kolbasov  |
| Village of Nová Sedlica | Restoration of public space in the Village of Nová Sedlica  |
| -Village of Príslop     | Restoration of public space in the centre of the Village of Príslop   |
| -Village of Ruský Potok | Restoration of the central part of the Village of Ruský Potok and increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny National Park |
| -Village of Topoľa      | Restoration of the central part of the Village of Topoľa and increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny National Park      |

-Village of Ubl'a	Fullfilment of conditions of the European Diploma for the Poloniny National Park – preservation of a traitional craft
-Village of Uličské Krivé	Restoration of public space, restoration of supplementary infrastructure of a cycling trail
-Village of Zboj	Restoration of the central part of the Village of Zboj and Revitalizácia centrálnej časti obce Zboj increase of safety of night environment in the Poloniny National Park

***Recommendation No. 7: Start experimenting with the selective felling of beech forest in a state-owned woodland unit; the national authorities shall inform the Group of Specialists on the Diploma each year of the progress made.***

As part of the Swiss project the SNC has commissioned the "**Creation of a Proposal of Forest Management Measures for the Buffer Zone of the Carpathian Beech Forests**" in the Poloniny NP. 9

The proposal of these **forest management measures** was prepared by the professional qualified person in August 2015. It is based on the valid forest management documentation (Directive No 1/2014 of the Slovak National Forest Centre - Forest management planning Institute entitled "Work Procedure for the Creation and Design of Multi-Stratum Vegetation Management Measures in Forest Management Plans"). The proposal consists of general proposals (made according to the age classes) and specific proposals for totally 9 forest units in the Poloniny NP. The proposal was prepared by a professionally qualified person in August 2015 and shall contribute to the improvement of the state of forests, taking the conservancy of natural beech forests into account. It will be basis for negotiations with the forest-owners during the September 2015 on specific measures.

Professional qualified person prepared in 2016 a study "**Price Demands of Realization of Forestry Management in the buffer zone of the Primeval Beech Forest in the Poloniny National Park**". This study will be basis for negotiations with land-owners and land-users.

### **3. Site Management:**

No changes of the environment since the last annual report. Changes regarding to staff/finances are described under recommendation No 3.

### **4. Boundaries:**

No change of the boundaries.

### **5. Other information:**

**Appart** for already mentioned the Governmental Decree No. 6/2016 by which the Borsukov vrch Nature Reserve is designated, there were not adopted any significant changes in nature protection, forestry and hunting **legislation**.

## **48. SLOVENIA – TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK**

**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. A new law should provide the adequate legal basis for the conservation of the Triglav National Park as early as possible.

According to the condition, the new law was adopted by the Parliament in 2010. Most of obstacles of the old law were adequately changed, including provision that the government has to provide additional funds

for development of local communities inside the park respecting sustainable development. Unfortunately, the economic crisis caused that the budget from 2013 on has been cut and consequently additional funds for development of local communities inside the park were cancelled.

2. The management plan must be finalised and formalised as soon as the new law on the Triglav National Park is passed

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Triglav National Park Management Plan for the period 2016 – 2025 in May 2016:

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED6942>

The Triglav National Park annual program of work for 2016 was already prepared according to the MP. All national and international projects which were already approved or are in the process of evaluation were selected and prepared according to the content of MP.

**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. Ensure that, when the new zoning is in place, any further change of zones is in favour of increased protection.

The 2010 law of TNP defines three zones, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> are central zone, 3<sup>rd</sup> is peripheral zone. The surface of central zone is now 63.900 ha which is 8.568 ha larger than before and the total park area is bigger because of the enlargement in its south part. The new law encourages transformation of 2<sup>nd</sup> zone to 3<sup>rd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> zone with the condition that the central part does not decrease. The main opportunity is to transform the zonation towards 1<sup>st</sup> zone (wilderness) and keep 3<sup>rd</sup> zone for sustainable use.

2. Apply strictly the land-use planning regulations related to new constructions and renovation work

Spatial planning at local level is exclusively under the jurisdiction of municipalities. Seven of the eight municipalities have adopted the land use plan. The plan of municipality of Kranjska Gora is still in the process of preparing. In the process of drafting a municipal spatial development plan and a municipal spatial order, the Public Institute Triglav National Park takes an active part, in accordance with the Nature Conservation Act and the new law on TNP, in preparation of nature conservation guidelines.

3. Continue to work on adapted solutions to solve the problem of wastewater, especially for buildings and huts with intensive human occupation.

There are 36 mountain huts in the Triglav National Park and at the end of the year 2016, 16 of them had wastewater treatment plants. For a few years Slovenian Alpine Association has a consultancy office that helps to solve environmental issues on the mountain huts. Together with the park staff regular consultancy and monitoring of the treated waste water is in place. Alpine clubs and managers accepted these activities in a very positive way and they are stimulated for improvements. A new Decree on the discharge and treatment of urban wastewater (Official Gazette RS, 98/15) was passed. According to the new Decree the proper treatment and discharge of the wastewater should be settled by the end of 2021. As a proper treatment of wastewater on the mountain huts are considered: wastewater treatment plants, 3-compartment septic tanks with drain field and dry toilets.

Four of six TNP mountain huts also got wastewater treatment plants this year.

4. Continue to develop schemes to enable the co-existence of sheep farming and the presence of large carnivores such as the bear, wolf and lynx, with the aim of increasing the carnivore population in the park

In 2013, the TNP Scientific advisory board adopted a strategy for the managing large carnivores within the protected area where the general policy and measures are foreseen. In practice, defined criteria and

measures are applied in conflict situations in which the TNP's assessment should be elaborated regarding the stakeholders requests for applying the radical measures with taking animals from the wild. In 2014, TNP officially entered a five-year project LIFE+ WolfAlps (LIFE12 NAT/IT/000807) with a focus on wolf conservation on population level (alpine subpopulation) and the improvement of its coexistence with humans. The actual project implementation concerning the mitigation of potential conflicts between wolf and humans started in 2015 with a purchase of two sets of preventive tools (electric fences) by TNP and donation to farms facing with damages on livestock caused by large carnivores. Fencing of grazing animals combined with a regular presence of Slovenian NGO members (DINARICUM society) was recognized as an effective preventive measure since no livestock losses have been detected. Within the next grazing season, the implementation of preventive measures of that kind will continue according to the project's timetable. Furthermore, several educational and awareness raising activities (e.g. guided school visits, exhibitions, etc) took place in 2015 in order to increase the acceptance for large carnivores by the general public and different users of the Triglav National Park area. Since the Triglav National Park together with the Prealpi Giulie Nature Park was nominated as a Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity of the Alpine Convention in 2014, we're also active in integrating conservation activities across political borders. Namely, public institutions of both protected areas are currently participating in a project ForAdapt run by the Department Forest- and Soil Sciences (DFS) at the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU) in Wien. The collaboration is aimed to establish grounds for adaptive cross border brown bear management within the study area. The project case study included also a workshop to engage relevant stakeholder representatives from Slovenia and Italy. It actually presents an important step for consistent implementation of joint future activities since concrete cross-border management questions for Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion have been addressed. The project results also clearly show that social and legal differences present significant barriers which have to be overcome for achieving effective crossborder collaboration on ecosystem protection.

5. Ensure the best integration possible of the various activities conducted in the Park, for example the integration of organic farming and nature protection.

In 2016 we continue to work on launching a brand for local products – ‘Sign of Quality’ – testifying that the product was produced in local environment of the Triglav National Park

[https://issuu.com/tnp-publikacije/docs/odkrivaj\\_discover\\_2016](https://issuu.com/tnp-publikacije/docs/odkrivaj_discover_2016)

Together with the Municipality of Bohinj, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and other experts we start to prepare a strategy of development of high-altitude pastures in Bohinj. The main purpose of the strategy is to define goals of development and prepare guidelines for implementation of activities to preserve active high-altitude pastures. So far a detailed analysis of current situation was made.

6. Pursue all measures aimed at converting artificial spruce forest to climax mixed forests and at increasing the area of protection forests

In general, the forests in TNP are well preserved. However, in some areas of intensively managed forests, the process of forest regeneration in the past was significantly influenced by human, with intentional introduction of spruce in particular. As a result, current share of spruce in some stands is significantly higher than expected. Today, forestry management plans do not encourage such practice since they require for the artificial regeneration to be carried out with pioneer vegetation only or with other broadleaved tree species occurring naturally in affected area. The main principle of today's forest management is to encourage natural regeneration; human induced one is recognized as an exemption only in order to improve the naturalness of altered forest stands or to increase their stability and resistance. TNP together with the Slovenian Institute for Nature Conservation are taking part in a process of forestry management plans preparation. Also the TNP Management Plan (2016-2025) requires that some forest stands with significantly changed tree species structure should be gradually improved. However, even



artificial, some conifer forests in Triglav National Park (e.g. high karst plateaus Pokljuka and Mežakla) are also important from nature conservation point of view (e.g. glacial relics such as Capercaillie and Three-toed Woodpecker) which presents an additional challenge for the proper management of forests in Triglav National Park.

In January–February 2014, an extreme ice storm caused damage to 51 % of forests across Slovenia and this event is recognized as the most catastrophic natural disturbance recorded for the country. However, in Triglav National Park direct impacts of an ice storm were not so severe since the damages were limited to the lowland forest stands. The expectations of increasing attacks of bark beetles within the protected area came true particularly in 2016 and they have significant implications on forest management as intensive interventions are required to limit further spread of bark beetles to healthy coniferous stands.

7. Develop and implement a detailed management plan and practical measures to cope with problems related to traffic and transportation. Detailed management plan which highlights problems related to traffic and transportation is part of TNP MP where transport and environmentally friendly mobility are on-going tasks. Most opportunities to fulfil the tasks are seen in project financing. In 2016 as part of the project *Comprehensive Introduction of Environmentally Friendly Mobility in Triglav National Park for the Preservation and Real Experiencing of Nature* an info point to promote sustainable mobility was established, a new parking space was built and two new bike rental spots were established. For more information see

<http://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project/SI02-0005>, [http://www.tnp.si/get\\_to\\_know/projects/2165](http://www.tnp.si/get_to_know/projects/2165).

Working group on Traffic Management on Pokljuka high plateau is working very hard to find solutions how to cope with increased stationary traffic during winter and winter sports events on Pokljuka.

This summer also operated Hop on hop off bus. To promote sustainable mobility a Timetable in the Alps was prepared. <http://www.cipra.org/sl/publikacije/vozni-redi-v-alpah-2016>

8. Prevent the extension of existing installations for downhill and cross-country skiing as well as jumping. Renovation and upgrading should be accepted only if that nature and landscape protection's interest are duly taken into account. Continue to monitor the various sporting activities practised in the national Park and ensure that they remain compatible with the conservation objectives.

According to the new law on TNP it is forbidden to construct new installations for downhill and cross-country skiing and enlarging of the existing ones in the whole territory of the park. In the year 2015 we monitored mountain biking and prepared a selection of biking trails for MP where mountain biking does not have negative impact on nature conservation. We also prepared a report on impact of winter sports on protected wild animals in the park.

9. Encourage the best integration of new buildings and the renovation of old buildings in respecting the traditional local style

The TNP Authority is running expert groundwork and an inventory and evaluation of the existing building stock in order to define the typology and provide potential solutions in construction works. The project is interdisciplinary (in association with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Faculty of Architecture and expert services of relevant municipalities) and subject to available funds.

In 2016 analytical part of the building typology for four villages in the TNP was prepared.

[http://obcina.bohinj.si/index.php?id=763&no\\_cache=1&tx\\_drblob\\_pi1%5BdownloadUId%5D=1162](http://obcina.bohinj.si/index.php?id=763&no_cache=1&tx_drblob_pi1%5BdownloadUId%5D=1162)

TNP is also involved in the licensing process for all building cases

10. Improve co-ordination and control research activities in the park consider the setting-up of a scientific advisory council



According to the new Law on The Triglav National Park every research institution or individual researcher needs an approval of TNP to conduct researches in the TNP. This gives park a possibility to control research activities, get results and have a spatial overview on research activities. As mentioned in previous reports, the Triglav National Park generally does not conduct basic research. Nevertheless we have a database of all scientific researches conducted in the territory of the park. In 2011 a system of spatial monitoring of scientific researches was established and is upgraded regularly. In 2016 we continued with systematic data collection on plant alien species in the Triglav National Park, so far we have 1598 locations in our database. The database of freshwater springs and its monitoring in TNP was updated. A new database of ponds was established.

11. Follow closely the transition of ownership in the park, encourage quick decisions on pending questions and ensure that the interests of the park are fully taken into account.

TNP does not have an active role in the denationalization process. Nevertheless we are in contact with the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and follow the process. According to the Denationalization Act when the state property is part of the denationalization process state attorney represents the state. First-instance authorities who consider the requests for denationalization are administrative units, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning.

### **3. Site Management:**

Due to difficult financial situation and governmental structural changes the year 2016 was quite demanding. Management was reduced to basic tasks.

### **4. Boundaries:**

No changes.

### **5. Other information:**

The Development Plan of UNESCO MaB Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps as a Sustainable Tourism Destination was adopted. <http://www.jesenice.si/obcina-jesenice/razvojni-dokumenti/item/13723-razvojni-nacrt-unesco-mab-obmocja-julijske-alpe>

Transboundary Ecoregion Julian Alps was awarded with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. [http://www.tnp.si/news/more/tnp\\_v\\_evropskem\\_parlamentu\\_v\\_bruslju\\_prejel\\_listino\\_za\\_trajnostni\\_turizem/](http://www.tnp.si/news/more/tnp_v_evropskem_parlamentu_v_bruslju_prejel_listino_za_trajnostni_turizem/)

<http://www.europarc.org/news/>

In 2016, the Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Convention carried out an evaluation process of officially nominated Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity in order to verify that Pilot Regions, which would like to be furthermore designated as a Pilot Region for Ecological Connectivity of the Alpine Convention, prove to be still active in promoting and improving ecological connectivity both, at the local level and as a model region nationally. All evaluated Pilot Regions, including the Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity Triglav National Park - Prealpi Giulie Nature Park successfully proved their continuous strong involvement on the topic of ecological connectivity therefore The Platform Ecological Network confirmed the recognition of all eight regions as Pilot Regions for Ecological Connectivity of the Alpine Convention for the upcoming four years.

### **6. Promotion of the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

In the Presentations of the Triglav National Park to the general and expert public receiving the European Diploma for Protected Areas is mentioned as a milestone in the history of the Triglav National Park and Diploma's logo is included into the presentations.

In the important documents of the Park (Management Plan, Work Plan for 2016 and Financial Plan for 2016) recommendations listed in the Diploma were taken into consideration when planning annual activities of the TNP, also Diploma logo was used on above mentioned printed documents.

Diploma logo was also on the publications produced by the Triglav National Park such as Svet pod Triglavom <http://www.tnp.si/razumeti/C69/>

Diploma logo and short description of the meaning and importance of Diploma is also on our new web site.

European Diploma was mentioned and its logo was used in all important events of the Park:

- Forum for sustainable development of Julian Alps Ecoregion  
[http://www.tnp.si/news/more/2\\_forum\\_za\\_trajnostni\\_turizem\\_ezmejne\\_ekoregije\\_julijske\\_alpe/](http://www.tnp.si/news/more/2_forum_za_trajnostni_turizem_ezmejne_ekoregije_julijske_alpe/)

#### 49. SPAIN – DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

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 Spanish authorities should continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that development projects of Port of Sevilla have no significant environmental impact on ecosystems of Doñana. Any decision should be conditioned by the results of a supplementary report (EIA) Environmental Impact Assessment study.***

In line with what has been reported in previous years, we can confirm that the project has not been authorized or executed, and that, taking into account the conclusions of the Scientific Commission (created in the ninth article of the Declaration of Environmental Impact approved in 2003 on this action), the foundations of the Supreme Court's Judgment, the position of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO) and the assessment of the managers of the Natural Space, the project will not be authorized.

**2. The Government of Andalusia, responsible for managing the national park and also the water management should ensure the high quality of water entering the national park and eliminate illegal extraction of groundwater; in accordance with the Framework Directive on Water, it should check the condition of the aquifer underlying the national park and the surrounding land, the extent of extraction of groundwater and water quality.**

In this regard, it is particularly noteworthy that the actions linked to the Special Plan for Irrigation Management North of the Doñana Forest Crown have continued since its approval until the date of this report, and we can note that progress is made in the following subjects:

- The governance of the Monitoring Commission itself, with aspects such as the approval of an internal operating regulation, or a system of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Plan.
- In terms of ecological connectivity, progress is made in the planning of actions, both in their design and in budget programming.
- On the improvement of groundwater management, the annual withdrawal plan for both basins has been carried out, as well as advances in the substitution of surface water by groundwater (for example, work has been completed to allow the transfer of 4,99 hm<sup>3</sup> / year from the Tinto, Odiel and Piedras basins).
- In the management of the Public Hydraulic Domain, concessions for exploitation are reviewed in both hydrographic basins affected by the Plan.

- Progress has been made in the delimitation of the forest area, including actions such as the demarcation of publicly owned forests included in the Plan.
- In surveillance and inspection tasks, more than 200 sanctioning files have been opened for change of land use, occupation of forests or public water use without an enabling title. Thus, before the end of this year, a total of 41 wells are expected to be closed, serving about 200 hectares and involving an extraction volume of 900.000 m<sup>3</sup>/year.
- Concerning the agricultural area, measures are included in the Rural Development Plan of Andalusia, in matters such as training, grants for the modernization of farms, etc.

In addition, it should be noted in this matter some actions taken from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Environment, such as:

- The purchase of the property Los Mimbrales, adjacent to the Natural Area of Doñana, and which involves the recovery of 6.8 hm<sup>3</sup>/year of extraction rights of the aquifer.

- At present, it is proposed the relocation of several wells that supply Matalascañas, in order to remove them from vulnerable areas of high ecological value, thus reducing the possible effects on them.

- It has also continued the monitoring of the status of the aquifer that has been carried out by the Hydrographic Confederation of the Guadalquivir (with data since 1970), as well as relevant additional studies, such as the one on Doñana Lagoon Monitoring through spatial remote sensing (already available) or the collaboration agreement between the Guadalquivir Hydrographic Confederation and the Pablo de Olavide University (Seville), for hydrological monitoring and modeling of the lagoon-aquifer relationship in Doñana (with a duration of three years), among others.

As a conclusion, work continues from the Ministry and from the autonomic administration, to achieve the objectives set by the conditions established in the process of renewal of the European Diploma in 2010.

**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. It should make every effort to restore the ecological health of the river catchment (river basin or watershed) level, in the sense of the Water Framework Directive; all appropriate measures should be taken to make use of water and other activities, especially agricultural activities in this basin (basin) support this objective;**

In 2016, the Guadalquivir Hydrological Plan corresponding to the Second Cycle of Planning (2015-2021), drafted in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, has been definitively approved. This Plan, among other actions, includes the Doñana 2021 project. The Doñana 2021 project also includes the Working Group for the elaboration of the Special Plan for the Guadalquivir Estuary. This Special Plan, which will be developed within the framework of the Hydrological Plan, is contemplated in the Water Framework Directive, and aims to make compatible the different uses of water (mainly supply to populations, industries, irrigation and river transport) with compliance of the environmental objectives in the lower section of the Guadalquivir, from the dam of Alcalá del Río to the mouth.

In addition, as explained in a previous point, work has been done on the implementation of the Special Irrigation Management Plan. All of these are important advances in relation to this recommendation.

**2. A specific emergency plan for the Doñana National Park should be prepared, and a map of natural hazards should be developed**

There have been no changes compared with the previous year's report. The Natural Area has a Self-Protection Plan against pollution episodes and is included as a priority area in the plan against forest fires in Andalusia: the INFOCA Plan.

**3. Implementation of the action plans for the conservation of flagship species, in particular the Iberian lynx and the Spanish imperial eagle, must be actively pursued; new action plans for other threatened species should be developed, if necessary.**

There are no substantial variations from that reported in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The activities included in the Iberline LIFE project continue their own development and there are also numerous recovery and conservation regional programs with impact in this area, where are considered most of the threatened species in Doñana:

- Recovery Plan for Imperial Eagle
- Recovery Plan for Iberian lynx.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan for Necrophagous Birds (where the Red kite is included among others endangered species).
- Recovery and Conservation Plan for Steppe Birds, that includes two endangered species recently disappeared in Doñana: Andalusian torillo and Great bustard, and five vulnerable nature of which at least three have regular presence in this natural space: Montagu's harrier, Black-bellied sandgrouse and Little bustard.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan of wetland's birds, including a species listed as vulnerable, Osprey, and six endangered: Great bittern, Marbled teal, Ferruginous duck, White-headed duck, Red-knobbed Coot and Squacco heron, all present in Doñana.
- Recovery and Conservation Plan on Fish and aquatic invertebrates collected eight endangered and seven vulnerable species, including *Aphanius baeticus*, *Accipenser sturio* and *Lampetra fluviatilis*.
- Plan on Dunes and Coastal Cliffs in which a large number of species of threatened flora present in Doñana are included, such as Coastal Juniper or *Linaria tursica*. In addition, it has been approved the LIFE Conhabit project, with the purpose to promote the improvement and conservation of priority habitats of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC present in Sites of Community Interest (SCI) on the Andalusian coast, acting on those threats that affect them and in turn, contribute to the improvement of the species they support. This will be done by restoring and managing the various habitats and enhancing social awareness. In Doñana there are 9 of these priority habitats.

During 2016, actions in the LIFE ADAPTAMED project "Protection of key ecosystem services threatened by climate change through the adaptive management of Mediterranean socio-ecosystems. LIFE14 CCA / ES / 000612" have been initiated in Doñana. This project aims to reduce the negative impact of climate change by focusing on the implementation of adaptation measures specifically targeting those socio-systems with a key role in the provision of the aforementioned ecosystem services. One of the main focal objectives of the project is to increase the resilience of these socio-systems. It is a project with a demonstrative character that is focused on the direct experimentation on the mentioned socioecosystems. This project has an estimated budget of €5,462,678, of which more than €1.7 million is provided by the autonomic administration.

**4. Regarding development projects for the Port of Seville, the Spanish authorities should draw upon the best international scientific experience and also take into account relevant international conventions such as the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention and the Berne Convention, and should work closely with relevant international organizations, including the European Union and the European Environment Agency.**

As reported in 2015, the specifically named Scientific Commission to issue an opinion on the matter, has probably received the best studies to date by specialists of the highest level. Likewise, the assessment has provided a network of sensors through which millions data have been collected from a battery of sufficient parameters to control all environmental variables of the estuary. This monitoring has allowed to determine the conservation status of all the values that have led to the recognition of Doñana by different international organizations that are related to the estuary.

In any case, as was also said above, this project will not be authorized.

**5. The management plan updating process should start in 2011.**

The management plan was approved by Decree 142/2016, of August 2<sup>nd</sup>, published in the Official Gazette of the Junta de Andalucía of September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It can be consulted in this link: <http://juntadeandalucia.es/boja/2016/185/1?item=0>

**6. The extension of the Doñana 2005 project for the riparian vegetation, for correcting erosion problems or for extending its scope to cultivated marshlands, should be undertaken.**

The Measures Program of the Guadalquivir Hydrological Plan, approved in January 2016, includes the development of the new Doñana 2021 project, that will favor the recovery of the masses associated with the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ES6150009 Doñana Norte and Oeste. The objective of Doñana 2021 is to launch new actions of hydrological restoration in the estuary, especially in the left bank of the Guadalquivir, as well as to improve the knowledge and management of the water masses around the Doñana Natural Area.

**7. The possibility of developing cooperation with other deltas holding the European Diploma, such as the National Reserve of Camargue (France) and the Biosphere Reserve of the Danube Delta (Romania), should be explored.**

The cooperation between Doñana and Camargue continues. During 2016 Doñana has hosted a french student who has made a diagnosis of the implementation of the Manual of Accessibility of the Government of Andalusia in the public use facilities of the Natural Space. In addition, during the month of May a delegation from Camargue was received, which visited the Natural Space as part of the cooperation program.

In addition, Doñana maintains lines of exchange and collaboration with numerous spaces in Europe and the rest of the world, which undoubtedly enriches the management of this natural space.

**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.

Regarding site management, the most important change is the approval of a new management plan, as mentioned previously.

In terms of staff, figures are similar to previous years. The investment during 2015 in the National Park has increased by more than two million euros over the previous year. Below are data for 2015 for the entire Natural Space:

TIPO	PERSONAL DE PLANTILLA				ATENCIÓN AVISITANTES	TOTAL
	ADMON.	MANTENIMIENTO	VIGILANCIA	TÉCNICO		
FUNCIONARIOS	2	0	31	10	0	43
LABORALES	0	37	43	1	14	95
<b>TOTALES</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>138</b>

Tabla 1: Personal de plantilla END 2015.

PERSONAL	1.452.507,73 €	1.452.507,73 €	2.905.015,47
SUMINISTROS Y GASTOS CORRIENTES	296.834,97 €	1.835.251,68 €	2.132.086,65
INVERSIONES	3.920.213,22 €	7.583.734,17 €	11.503.947,38
<b>Total Resultado</b>	<b>5.669.555,92 €</b>	<b>10.871.493,58 €</b>	<b>16.541.049,50 €</b>

Tabla 45: Presupuesto ejecutado END (Parque Nacional y Parque Natural) 2015. Capítulos principales.

**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.

Although the limits of the National Park have not changed, after the approval of Decree 142/2016, the surface of the Natural Park, to the west of the National Park, has been expanded by 14402,34 hectares, which undoubtedly constitutes an important measure of protection with regard to external impacts.

**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.

In the report of the 36th meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma, held in Strasbourg on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016, it is requested to include in this document information on: (1) adoption of the Governmental Decree concerning the Park Management Plan; (2) adequacy of the second planning cycle (2015-2021) of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River basin and (3) the evaluation of the Hydrological Plan.

On the first point, information has already been provided in previous sections of this report.

On the second, was approved by Royal Decree 1/2016, of 8 January. All the documentation about it can be consulted in the following link: <http://www.chguadalquivir.es/demarcacion-hidrografica-guadalquivir>.

On the third, prior to the approval of the previous document, underwent a strategic environmental assessment. The document of Strategic Environmental Study can be consulted here:

[http://www.chguadalquivir.es/documents/10182/41420/Estudio\\_Ambiental\\_Estrategico\\_Guadalquivir.pdf/336b606b-9d8d-48ae-b0d6-089be7f2bd76](http://www.chguadalquivir.es/documents/10182/41420/Estudio_Ambiental_Estrategico_Guadalquivir.pdf/336b606b-9d8d-48ae-b0d6-089be7f2bd76).

## 50. SPAIN – ORDESA AND MONTE PERDIDO NATIONAL PARK

**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.

No conditions

**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.- Implement the National Park's management plan in accordance with the land use and management plan (PRUG) drawn up in 2004 and Law no. 5/2007 of 3 April on the Network of National Parks.**

The 2014 and 2015 reports detailed the procedure followed for the preparation and approval of the Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) from 2012 to April 2015, when the Master Plan of Use and

Management (PRUG) was finally approved by Decree 49/2015, which came into force the day after being published in the Aragon Official Gazette on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2015. This approval satisfies the provisions of this recommendation.

**2.- Finalise the feasibility study on moving the Pineta Valley municipal campsite and examine the available options.**

As stated in the 2014 and 2015 reports, the writing of the study “New situation of the camping site in the valley of Pineta (Peripheral Protection Zone of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park)” was finished in 2009. The study contemplates 14 alternatives (including an alternative to maintain the camping area in the same place). On all of them an analysis and evaluation of the risk of flooding, forest fires, soil movement, falling trees, the proximity of a public way, lighting, technological origin and avalanches has been carried out. On seeing the conclusions, in 2011 the Bielsa Council publicised the closure of the camping site located on a land held by the municipality in an area outside the National Park but bordering it. At the present time, the camping area is definitively closed. In the place previously destined as a camping area, the Bielsa Council has prepared an area for parking. Nowadays, given that the aforementioned area is part of a mountain of public utility, the Provincial Service of Rural Development and Sustainability has included the vehicles parking area for recreational tourist use in the annual plan for the exploitation of the mountain. In addition, in 2015 the National Park has restored the toilets of the old camping area, which were in poor condition, and has modernized them in order to serve to parking users and visitors of the National Park. These actions satisfy the provisions of this recommendation.

**3.- Pursue the scheme to make the Añisclo Canyon open to pedestrians.**

As stated in the 2014 and 2015 reports, the 2015 Master Plan of Use and Management (PRUG) establishes regulating access by the Añisclo Canyon as below: *“HU-631 road and the asphalted forest track extending it into the mountain of public utility (MUP) No. 66. In periods of high attendance circulation will take place only in direction of entrance to the National Park, while circulation to exit will be the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track. Periods of high attendance considered are holidays of Easter, from June 1<sup>st</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>, and those dates determined by the National Park Directorate, even outside these ranges, because of being predictable a high number of visitors. During the rest of the year both accesses will maintain two-way traffic. This regulation will be provisional until the inclusion of the Puyarruego-Buerba asphalted track in the Aragon Road Network. Thereafter, the traffic will be carried out only in single ascending direction and exiting by the Puyarruego-Buerba way”*.

This regulation is the result of the unacceptability of the proposed measures in the study on the risk of landslides and flooding from the environmental and landscape point of view, since they would radically transform the Añisclo Canyon, wasting a substantial portion of its natural values.

Before that, the Director of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park had drafted a report on the non-viability of pedestrian access to the Añisclo Canyon, which contained the aforesaid considerations and beheld that the best option was to keep the visits regime by private vehicle, regulating traffic along HU-631 road and the asphalted forest track extending it from Ereta de Bies to La Tella in single ascending direction and exiting by using the asphalted track Puyarruego-Buerba during the period of maximum public access (Easter week and summer time), and maintaining two-way traffic the rest of the year. The Trust Board (Junta Rectora) reported favorably on the aforesaid report (agreement No. 9) and also, the Governing Board (Patronato) adopted an agreement (agreement No. 11), which favorably reports on the non-viability of pedestrian access to the Añisclo Canyon.

On the other hand, a parallel footpath to the road from the parking area to the San Urbez bridge had been enabled in order to avoid the transit of walkers along the asphalted way. Furthermore, two footpaths belonging to the Park Paths Network start from San Urbez bridge, one short self-guided interpretative tour, the SIA1, from the bridge to the old Aso water mill and one long self-guided tour, the SA1, from the

bridge to the Añisclo pass by Fuen Blanca, which both serve to meet the demand of footpaths for visitors who get there by car.

In conclusion, since the satisfaction of the demand for pedestrian visit to the Añisclo Canyon is ensured by SIA1 and SA1 paths, the decision of keeping the visits regime to the Añisclo sector by private vehicle was made, regulating seasonally as stated above.

**4.- In collaboration with the Pyrenees National Park (France), implement the co-operation measures set out in the Agreement on joint activities of the two National Parks.**

As stated in the previous annual reports, since 2012 the collaboration between the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (OMPNP) and The Pyrenees National Park (PNP) has been carried out in three inter-related ways: The regular collaboration between both National Parks within the framework of the Charter of Cooperation, the joint work within the framework of The World Heritage Site Pyrenees Monte Perdido and the work related to POCTEFA.

As for the regular collaboration between the two parks under the Charter of Cooperation, it has been remained without any novelty.

Within the framework of the World Heritage Site Pyrenees Monte Perdido (WHSPMP), due to successive electoral processes in both France and Spain in 2015 the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) did not meet that year. However, the JSC met on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Huesca to transfer the presidency and the secretariat to France for the 2016/2017 biennium, discuss the progress of the Site Management Plan, be informed about the end of the POCTEFA project for the 2011/2015 programming period, discuss the new POCTEFA project for the 2016/2019 period, talk about the recommendations of the UNESCO and expand the composition of the JSC in order to include the scientific and associative sectors of both countries. Besides, the Committee has a technical group of three members by country, consisting of a representative of the State, one of the Regional Administration (on the Spanish side, it is the Director of the OMPNP) and another one of local Administrations. This group has regularly met since the establishment of the Joint Steering Committee to prepare its meetings, the coordination of joint reports, tracking the development of the WHSPMP Management Plan, develop the POCTEFA project of the previous period and prepare the new POCTEFA project for the new period.

On the other hand, the book "*Writing time. Pyrenees Monte Perdido*" (a print run of 1,000 copies) consisting of black and white photographs accompanied by short texts, was published in December 2015. The book was edited by several partners, among which were the Pyrenees National Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park.

Finally, under POCTEFA, cross-border project in which the Pyrenees National Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park participate, along with the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage of the Government of Aragon, the General Council of High Pyrenees, the Community of Municipalities of Gèdre-Gavarnie, the Syndical Commission of Baresges Valley and, as team leader, the Region of Sobrarbe, regular coordination meetings among its members took place. As stated in the previous annual reports, several actions were included in this project, which has already been finalized.

A new POCTEFA project, whose partners are the Pyrenees National Park, the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, the General Council of High Pyrenees, the Tourism Office of Gèdre-Gavarnie, the Region of Sobrarbe and, as team leader, the Municipality of Gèdre-Gavarnie, was accepted for the new programming period 2016/2019.

**5.- Study the proposal to extend the Park and organise the consultation study.**

In this respect there is nothing new about what was indicated in the earlier years reports. There is still no consensus in the area about a possible extension to the Bujaruelo Valley, mainly because of the current high quality of the naturalness and conservation of the present National Park which would weaken with the incorporation of new territory (the Bujaruelo Valley) whereby currently runs a cross-border high



voltage power line. Notwithstanding this, one of the ten specific objectives that the 2015 PRUG contemplates is to promote the extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone in the future. For that reason, the PRUG's programme of activities No. 9, derived from the above mentioned specific objective, counts on the following guideline: *“Establish ways for assessment and collaboration with concerned social agents and public administrations in order to promote the extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone”*, which involve the activities: *“to undertake a study of the natural resources in the neighbouring territory of the National Park in order to estimate its adaptability to be part of the National Park and for a better execution of its objectives”* and *“carry out meetings with local administrations and social agents in order to know the level of acceptance of a possible extension of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone, based on the report by the National Parks Agency (OAPN) in 2002”*.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, as stated in the 2015 report, it is necessary to emphasise that Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone coincide with several spaces of the Nature Network 2000 (SPA and SCI). The National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone also coincide with three UNESCO figures: the Biosphere Reserve of Ordesa-Viñamala (belonging to the MaB program), Sobrarbe Geopark and World Heritage Site Pyrenees-Mont Perdu, also coincident with the Cultural Landscape Pyrenees-Mont Perdu. The aforesaid spaces of Natura 2000 Network as well as the above-mentioned UNESCO figures extend beyond the limits of the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone.

**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 boundary changes. Maps of the other protection areas that include the National Park and its Peripheral Protection Zone were attached in the 2014 report: Nature 2000 Network, Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage Site and Geopark.

**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.

Regarding the request of the Group of Specialists of the European Diploma, the 2015 report lists the ways that the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park publicizes the European Diploma logo.

On the other hand, in September 2016 the National Park received an expert from the Council of Europe (Mr. Olivier Biber) for on the spot expert appraisal of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park for the renewal of the Diploma in 2018.

The visit was carried out in accordance with the following program:

- *Sunday, 11th September*

Evening: Reception and accommodation of Mr. Biber in Torla

- *Monday, 12th September*

9:30 - 11:00 Meeting with the Governing Board (Junta Rectora), the president of the Trust Board (Patronato) of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park and the Head of the Natural Areas and Sustainable Development.

## Members of the Governing Board:

- Ms. Sandra Ortega Bravo, Director General of Sustainability on behalf of the Minister of the Department of Rural Development and Sustainability of the Government of Aragon (and President of the Governing Board) and on her own behalf
- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, on behalf of the Director of the National Parks Agency.
- Mr. Enrique Campo Sanz, President of the Region of Sobrarbe.
- Mr. Miguel Ángel Noguero Mur, Mayor of Bielsa.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.

## And also

- Mr. Modesto Pascau Canales, President of the Trust Board
- Mr. David Guzmán Otano, Head of the Natural Areas and Sustainable Development.

## Were also present

- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.
- Mr. Diego Navarro Gutiérrez, Head of the Nacional Park's Sustainable Development and Works Team

## 11:30 – 13:00 Meeting with experts and stakeholders (all of them members of the Trust Board):

- Ms. Paloma Ibarra Benlloch, Department of Geography and Territory; University of Zaragoza.
- Mr. Juan Ignacio López Moreno, Superior Council for Scientific Research – Pyrenean Institute of Ecology.
- Mr. Juan de la Riva Fernández, President of the Council for the Protection of Nature.
- Mr. Mariano Polanco Cedenilla, member of Ecologists in Action.
- Mr. Juan Antonio Gil Gallús, member of the Foundation for the Conservation of the Bearded Vulture
- Mr. Modesto Pascau Canales, representative of the Aragonese Mountain Federation
- Mr. José Vicente Palacio Clemente, representative of the landowners.

## Were also present

- Ms. Sandra Ortega Bravo, Director General of Sustainability
- Mr. David Guzmán Otano, Head of the Natural Areas and Sustainable Development.
- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, representative of the National Parks Agency.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.
- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.
- Mr. Diego Navarro Gutiérrez, Head of the Nacional Park's Sustainable Development and Works Team

15:00 – 18:00 Hike into the National Park (Ordesa sector)

- *Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September*

8:30 Transport to Bielsa Pineta Valley

10:00 – 11:30 Meeting with stakeholders (livestock breeders) and a representative of the Pyrenees National Park (France) and short hike into the National Park (Pineta sector)

Livestock breeders:

- Mr. José Lorenzo Gistau Frechín, representative of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido Livestock Breeders Association; livestock breeder in Pineta sector.
- Mr. Feliciano Sesé Cazcarra, livestock breeder in Escuaín sector.
- Mr Gerardo Pañart Lascorz, livestock breeder in Añisclo sector
- A representative of livestock breeders in Ordesa sector was invited but he was finally unable to attend the meeting

Were also present

- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, representative of the National Parks Agency.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.
- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.

11:30 Transport to Pineta Valley

12:00 – 13:00 Meeting with a stakeholder representative of the Pyrenees National Park (France) and short hike into the National Park (Pineta sector)

- Mr. Gilles Perron, Director of the Pyrenees National Park

Were also present

- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, on behalf of the Director of the National Parks Agency.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.
- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.

15:00 – 16:00 Transport to Boltaña

16:00 – 17:30 Meeting with stakeholders (representatives of local entities)

- Mr. Enrique Campo Sanz, President of the Region of Sobrarbe.
- Mr. Miguel Ángel Noguero Mur, Mayor of Bielsa.
- Mr. Miguel Villacampa Oliván, Mayor of Torla-Ordesa.
- Mr. José Manuel Bielsa Manzano, Mayor of Puértolas.
- Mr. Feliciano Sesé Cazcarra, Mayor of Tella-Sin.
- Mr. José Ramón Nerín Sesé, Councilor of Fanlo
- Ms. Carmen Muro Gracia, Mayor of Broto.

- Mr. Enrique Ramón Muro, representative of the Provincial Government; Councilor of Torla-Ordesa.

Were also present

- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, representative of the National Parks Agency.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.
- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.

17:30 Transport to Torla

- Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> September

8:30 Transport to Añisclo Canyon and tour vehicle along Añisclo way

11:30 -13:30 Short hike into the circular itinerary of San Úrbez

16:30 Transport to Huesca

18:00 – 19:00 Conclusions meeting with the National Park staff.

- Mr. David Guzmán Otano, Head of the Natural Areas and Sustainable Development.
- Mr. Manuel Montes Sánchez, Director of the National Park.
- Mr Javier Rubio de Urquía, representative of the National Parks Agency
- Mr. Luis Marquina Murlanch, Head of the Nacional Park's Public Use Team.
- Ms. Elena Villagrasa Ferrer, Head of the Nacional Park's Conservation Team.
- Mr. Diego Navarro Gutiérrez, Head of the Nacional Park's Sustainable Development and Works Team.

- Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> September

Morning: Depart

## 51. SPAIN – TEIDE NATIONAL PARK

**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.

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)5 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Teide National Park (Spain)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 at the 1068th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution Res (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution Res (89) 10 on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Teide National Park (Spain);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 2 and 3 March 2009;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention,

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Teide National Park until 18 June 2019;

**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. the areas around the cable car should be restored in line with the Proyecto de restauración de la Rambleta del Teide;***

Maintenance and upgrade work will commence shortly on two of the three paths (No. 10 Telsforo Bravo, No. 11 Mirador de La Fortaleza and No. 12 Mirador de Pico Viejo) in the La Rambleta area. In addition, in recent years the cable car operator Teleférico de Pico Teide, S. A. has requested authorisation for, and undertaken, various small-scale improvement works that have benefitted the environment.

***2. efforts to eradicate populations of moufflons and wild rabbits from inside and outside the park, with special emphasis on removing the invasive animal pressure from areas located outside the park should be continued;***

Campaigns to eradicate, in the case of mouflon, and control populations, in the case of rabbit, continue. Specifically, with respect to rabbit, the actions have been confirmed to be highly effective, since the general results (census analysis) reveal largely reduced numbers. Similarly, the latest mouflon population censuses show low levels (fewer than 150 individuals).

It should be noted that these actions are also carried out outside the boundaries of the national park in cooperation with the administrators of these areas.

***3. the roadworks cabin near Riachuelo Reserve, close to the TF-21 road should be removed, thus implementing the 12.4.4 provision of the Teide National Park Management Plan (plan rector de uso y gestión);***

Se han mantenido varias reuniones, con especial incidencia en los últimos meses, con el grupo montañero que utiliza el refugio cercano a El Riachuelo con el fin de encontrar una solución dentro del marco que fija el PRUG. Se confía en que tras el reciente cambio de administración competente en la gestión del parque se pueda agilizar el tema.

***4. the remaining buildings near the Sanatorium (el sanatorio) should be demolished and ecological restoration of the area should be undertaken;***

There are no legal documents establishing ownership of these buildings by those people who sporadically and very occasionally use them, although it is probable that they hold rights to them by adverse possession. Some time ago a request for proposal was brought to initiate expropriation proceedings on the ground that this was probably the most appropriate course of action. The recent delegation of ordinary management of the national park to the Cabildo de Tenerife (Tenerife Island Council) and the demonstrably greater involvement of local authorities (the Cabildo and the relevant municipality) in this matter suggests that it will gain fresh impetus.

***5. the monitoring of the effects of global climate change on the park's ecosystems should be improved so as to anticipate potential damage and possibly take adaptation measures;***

In order to have an adequate data collection system, the national park has installed five automatic weather stations, with real-time data transmission, in keeping with standards of the State Meteorological Agency. These stations are complemented by more traditional stations based on traditional data collection systems

(thermo-hygrographs and rain gauges). The data obtained are subject to annual review and contrasted with previous periods in order to observe patterns of change.

Moreover, in recent years, a floral phenology sampling system has been introduced for the representative plant species of the ecosystem. Data collection has been simplified as much as possible to allow for geo-referencing of multiple observations from all the staff of the national park. Subsequent processing of the data enables monitoring of overall or specific peak flowering times (peak values), and contrasting the annual values in relation to climate monitoring could show concurrent patterns of change.

Finally, the sampling of 21 grids of 500 x 500 m continues, in order to study and classify existing floral variety using various wealth and abundance indices to analyse how the process of climate change induces changes in biodiversity as a result of processes of enrichment (arrival and settlement of new species) or impoverishment (disappearance of species).

***6. genetic and ecological studies on endangered endemic or indigenous plant species should be continued in order to ensure that plans to restore these species are carried out; the extension of these programmes to all endangered species should be considered;***

Monitoring programmes are currently targeting species in the national park that are considered threatened in the Canary Island Catalogue of Endangered Species. These species are *Stemmacantha cynaroides*, *Helianthemum juliae* and *Bencomia exstipulata* (listed as endangered) and *Silene nocteolens* and *Dactylis metlesicsii* (listed as vulnerable). Periodic sampling of these 5 taxa in their main populations is being considered to corroborate the existence of adequate population dynamics and that no regression processes are taking place.

These 5 taxa are also subject to various *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation projects, including localised fencing to keep out introduced herbivores and the planting of specimens in nurseries. Regarding the latter approach, seeds were gathered and propagated in nurseries under a strict labelling system that allows the specimens to be reintroduced into the wild knowing where they originated, thus meeting the guidelines for strengthening and translocation as indicated in various genetic studies.

Moreover, and beyond the conservation of only threatened species, a course of action has been undertaken based on the fencing off of large areas (over 10 ha) to allow the recovery of those enclaves where the dominant ecosystem has been particularly affected by high mortality of adult specimens of the dominant species or by the absence of younger generations replacing the older.

***7. the access of visitors to the park should be strictly controlled, and the access plan (plan de acceso) adopted as required by the management plan;***

The number of visitors to the national park has remained stable in recent years and does not represent any threat to the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

In 2015 there were 3,289,444 visitors, only a slight increase over 2014 (3,212,632) and slightly less than 2013 (3,292,247).

***8. the public use plan (plan de uso publico) should be adopted and implemented.***

Efforts are currently under way to plan the implementation of an integrated management system for public use of the national park, which aims to provide more and better services that will have a positive impact on the quality of the visit.

It should be noted, particularly with regard to the last two sections, that the review of the Teide National Park Management Plan (plan rector de uso y gestión, PRUG) has met with significant delays due to, amongst other reasons, the transfer of the ordinary management of the National Park to the Canary Islands Regional Government in 2010, and subsequently, in 2016 (although already planned years earlier) by the delegation of its management from the regional authority to the Cabildo Insular de Tenerife (Tenerife Island Council). Moreover, in the course of the ongoing work on drawing up a new PRUG, two

new laws have been passed that are of particular significance to the Plan: 1) the new National Parks Act (Law 30/2014 of 3 December), and 2) Law 14/2014, of 26 December, harmonising and simplifying the protection of land and natural resources.

**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.

Royal Decree 1550/2009, of 9 October, on expanding the State Administration functions and services transferred to the Canary Islands Autonomous Community, related to nature conservation (Teide, Timanfaya, Caldera and Garajonay National Parks). The transfer of functions and services under this Agreement (ordinary management of protected areas) came into effect, in the case of el Teide, from 1 January 2010.

Decree 70/2011 of 11 March, creating the Canary Islands National Parks Network. And Decree 69/2014 of 26 June, amending Decree 70/2011 of 11 March, creating the Canary Islands National Parks Network. The Canary Islands National Parks Network is created with the aim of institutionalising connections and interrelationships between the National Parks in the archipelago. Provision is made for the option of delegating management to the Island Councils. The Canary Islands National Parks Commission is also created as a collegial body responsible for shared representation, coordination, administration and management of the Canary Islands National Parks Network and the National Parks that comprise the network. The Conservation Directorate of each National Park is the body responsible for its material and ordinary management. The Patronato (Parks Trust) is the public body that oversees the management policies that are developed in the Park.

Decree 141/2015 of 11 June 11, delegating the functions of the Public Administration of the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands in the management of the Teide National Park to the Cabildo Insular de Tenerife. The Plenary Session of the Cabildo held on 27 November 2015 approved this delegation. Lastly, the official document certifying the handover of property, resources and records in implementation of Decree 141/2015 was signed on 3 February 2016 but with effect from 1 January 2016.

At present (end of 2016), the staff of the National Park comprises 11 civil servants and 19 employees, in addition to 31 public sector employees, 3 private sector and, in summer, during the firefighting season, another 43 public sector employees.

**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.

Without 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.

At the end of February 2011, the new Administrative and Service Center (office) of the national park in La Orotava was inaugurated, an annex of which is a Native Flora Garden.

In 2014, Teide National Park and the summits of Tenerife received the 'Starlight' certification, in the first case in the category of Tourist Destination and in the second as that of Reserve, granted by the Canary Islands Astrophysics Institute (IAC) through the Canary Foundation for the Dissemination of Astronomy.

In November of the same year, the National Park, specifically its Director-Conservative, participated in

the World Parks Congress, held in Sydney, Australia, with an exposition of successful experiences in the area of genetic rescue and climate change.

This was the same month and year (November 2014) in which the Juan Évora Ethnographic Museum and the Telesforo Bravo Visitors Center were opened to the public, the latter located in La Orotava next to the national park office.

## 52. SWEDEN - BULLERÖ AND LÅNGVIKSSKÄR NATURE RESERVES

**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 management plans for the two nature reserves have not yet been updated.  |
| 2. | Talks with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency about establishing the area as a national park are due to restart during the year.              |
| 3. | The proliferation of toxic algae in the archipelago is being assessed on a regular basis.  |
| 4. | The sources of disturbances in the reserves and the bird sanctuaries are being supervised.<br>The efforts to limit the mink population have increased. |

**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. | The management plans for the two nature reserves have not yet been updated.  |
| 2. | Talks with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency about establishing the area as a national park are due to restart during the year.              |
| 3. | The proliferation of toxic algae in the archipelago is being assessed on a regular basis.  |
| 4. | The sources of disturbances in the reserves and the bird sanctuaries are being supervised.<br>The efforts to limit the mink population have increased. |

**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 has been made since last year.
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**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.
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**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.



The Diploma logo and text about the European Diploma for Protected areas has been used in the information about Bullerö (Bullero.se) and Långviksskär (<http://skargardsstiftelsen.se/omrade/langviksskar/natur/>) during 2016.

We had the honour and pleasure to receive the EDPA visit in August. The visit was exposed in the Archipelago Foundation's journal.

### 53. SWEDEN - MUDDUS NATIONAL PARK

**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.

No conditions are listed neither in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)2 on the renewal of the European Diploma, nor in the Resolution Res(67)23 on the award of the European Diploma. Hence it follows that there are no conditions to be explained.

**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. Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the "Laponiatjuottjudus" (management board) in order to implement the new management plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the county management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;*

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has ten employees. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the management plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The future challenge is to continue the work of creating a reliable and steady platform in order to develop and maintain management work required to preserve and develop the Laponian World Heritage site. The transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend. Laponiatjuottjudus has recently received an extended trial period from the Swedish Government in order to manage the Laponian World Heritage site. Hence the management of Lapponia remains in the care of Laponiatjuottjudus.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on [http://lapponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lapponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327\\_2.pdf](http://lapponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Lapponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf).

*2. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;*

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Lapponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB). The results from this year different inventories has not yet been presented.

*3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Lapponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;*

Laponiatjuottjudus GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we have not yet been granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However the work to develop and build up a Lapponia GIS has increased during 2016 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. We now have a basic GIS system that can be used within the organization. Although the development of our GIS system is a

long-term work in progress that will continue during 2017. The development of Laponia GIS is a very important and time consuming work although it is a crucial management system in order to gather and store necessary information and execute spatial analyses.

*4. Continue the monitoring of the fire areas including the natural regeneration processes and design a programme to monitor the effects of climatic change;*

In 2013 the Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB) summarized the studies, which have been conducted in the forest fire area, into a report. Muddus/Muttos ecology and fire history is well documented and it is a common important task for the future to continue and encourage the research in the area. It is important to encourage people to visit the park and also give the visitors a broad range of information about the whole Muddus/Muttos area, including the value of forest fires for the biodiversity.

During 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus have continued to stay in touch with the map producing company who produced the map over Muddus/Muttos area in 2015. In the future updates of the map we may be able to highlight strategic visitor places and also canalize visitors in their hikes in the national park. This map also shows where the forest fire in 2006 took place.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

*5. Assess the visitor flows and their impact both within and outside the park (ecological and economic impact);*

During 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus have been using visitor counters in Muddus/Muttos and we intend to continue using visitor counters at strategic places in the National Park. With this information the management have developed a good estimation of where and how people hikes in the area. Laponiatjuottjudus have performed maintenance on the trails after this summer's windfalls. Keeping the trails accessible is important in order to allow people to visit the park in a safe way.

New signs for every tourist cabin and staff cabin in the Laponia WH area have been mounted on the cabins in 2016. The visitor cabins are equipped with suitable information about the area that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas. Laponiatjuottjudus also search additional funding to create new signs for directions in Muddus/Muttos National Park. The ambition is that these signs will be produced and mounted during the following year. Further the management of Laponia also search additional funding to be able to maintain a good standard on the trails.

*6. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;*

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

*7. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.*

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

**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.

Today Laponiatjuottjudus management crew consist of six full-time employees, two part-time employees and also two employees working with projects.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2016 the economic funding was comparable to 2015's economic funding. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affect the management since it is very difficult to plan in the long-term as the funding varies every year and hence it is a question of prioritizing.

**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 of boundaries to report.

**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.

During 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued to investigate the suspected establishment of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in the National Park. The management has thru field studies verified that there are lodgepole pine within the park's borders. Now the work intensifies by completing a plan of action for removal of unwanted lodgepole pine. This work will continue during 2017.

During 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued the work of planning for a new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos. Some adjustments in the construction plan have been done, due to reduced funding. With the new visitor entrance in the National Park we believe that we better can canalise and also monitor the effect visitors have on the area. Our intention is to start building in 2017. The entrance will be wheelchair accessible and contain an entrance portal, fireplaces, information signs, toilet, recycling station and a parking space. The new entrance is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). The plan is that new visitor entrance in Muddus/Muttos also will contain the European Diploma logo with additional information about this acknowledgement.

In 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued working with the task of developing our website. This is an ongoing process. In addition to the fact that the whole Lapponia area of 9400 km<sup>2</sup> is a World Heritage, it also consists four National parks and two Nature reserves. Therefore we present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Muddus/Muttos National Park we announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma. In addition to Lapponia's own homepage we also collaborate with SEPA and provide information to their website concerning Sweden's National Parks ([www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)).

#### **54. SWEDEN - SAREK AND PADJELANTA NATIONAL PARKS**

**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.

No conditions are listed neither in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)3 on the renewal of the European Diploma, nor in the Resolution Res(67)23 on the award of the European Diploma. Hence it follows that there are no conditions to be explained.

**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. Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the "Laponiatjuottjudus" (management board) in order to implement the new Management Plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the County management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;*

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has ten employees. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the management plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The future challenge is to continue the work of creating a reliable and steady platform in order to develop and maintain management work required to preserve and develop the Laponian World Heritage site. The transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend. Laponiatjuottjudus has recently received an extended trial period from the Swedish Government in order to manage the Laponian World Heritage site. Hence the management of Laponia remains in the care of Laponiatjuottjudus.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on [http://laponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Laponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327\\_2.pdf](http://laponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Laponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf).

*2. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;*

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Laponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB). The results from this year different inventories has not yet been presented.

*3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Laponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;*

Laponiatjuottjudus GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we have not yet been granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However the work to develop and build up a Laponia GIS has increased during 2016 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. We now have a basic GIS system that can be used within the organization. Although the development of our GIS system is a long-term work in progress that will continue during 2017. The development of Laponia GIS is a very important and time consuming work although it is a crucial management system in order to gather and store necessary information and execute spatial analyses.

*4. Closely monitor the use of snowmobile, motor boats and other off-road vehicles, particularly in view of controlling illegal hunting and fishing;*

Controls and authority in Sarek/Badjelánnda is handled by the police and the Norrbotten County Administrative Board. Laponiatjuottjudus is cooperating with the authorities and we are working to maintain that visitors and inhabitants in the parks are following existing laws and regulations. We provide accessible information on our website about the regulations for the National Parks and we also have contact with the local inhabitants as well as local tourist organizations.

*5. Set up a system for estimating the number of visitors, their profile and distribution over the year and initiate a research programme on the long term impact of the different human activities (e.g. reindeer herding, fishing and tourism) on the landscape, and design a programme to monitor the effects of the climatic change;*

Laponiatjuottjudus is continuously working with the question concerning the number of visitors in the National Parks. In 2016 we have used five visitor counters in strategic places in Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks. This is an ongoing work and we plan to continue using visitor counters on strategic places in the parks in the following years. For Padjelanta/Badjelánnda we collect statistics of the number of visitors from the tourist cabins situated in the park.

The impact of the different human activities on the landscape is an important question. Laponiatjuottjudus work with the reindeer herding communities in matters of concern. We also work with the Norrbotten County Administrative Board and towards tourist companies in matters of permissions and tourist activities. During 2015 we have initiated a project and a field study in Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda concerning the knowledge of how, when and where the indigenous Sámi people in the National Parks have fished and still fishes for their household requirements. This study is looking at fishing from different aspects (e.g. biological, historical and cultural) and we also study the biology of fish in different waters in the Laponia WH area. In 2016 the field study continued involving more lakes.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

*6. Build and equip as soon as possible the Visitor information centre in Stora Sjöfallet for the Laponia WH site and provide specific information on the different National Parks; establish a network of smaller information points at strategic entrances into the Parks and communicate about the different categories of international designations;*

The Naturum Laponia visitor information center in Stora Sjöfallet was officially opened in the autumn of 2014 and it consist of a large building including an exhibition area, a café and an auditorium. Outside there are traditional sámi buildings. Laponiatjuottjudus obligation is to maintain the buildings and manage activities in the visitor center. Since Stora sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkke National Park is adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks the visitor center possesses information for all three National

Parks and also gives the visitor information about the entire Laponia world heritage site (WH). Our experience is that the visitor center gives the visitors crucial information about how to behave in the protected areas and in the entire WH site. The visitor center plays an important role as a fixture before and after visiting the parks. An increased number of visitors during 2016 have given us a great opportunity to reach out and educate more people about the WH area and its different values.

Smaller information points at strategic entrances into the parks (nodes) have already been installed in 2014 in Porjus, Gällivare and Jokkmokk. In 2015 a node adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks was installed in Kvikkjokk. All these nodes contains information about the WH site, including the National Parks. In 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus have arranged information events in the node in Gällivare. We are working to link the nodes together with Naturum visitor center to make the information about the WH site accessible for more people.

*7. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;*

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

*8. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage*

*Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.*

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

**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.

Today Laponiatjuottjudus management crew consist of six full-time employees, two part-time employees and also two employees working with projects.

Laponiatjuottjudus operate at a limited level due to the economic funding. During 2016 the economic funding was comparable to 2015's economic funding. But still the future funding is very uncertain and varies from one year to another. This insufficient funding of course affect the management since it is very difficult to plan in the long-term as the funding varies every year and hence it is a question of prioritizing.

**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 of boundaries to report.

**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.

New signs for every tourist cabin and staff cabin in the Laponia WH area have been mounted on the cabins in 2016. Each sign display the name of the specific cabin in both Sámi, Swedish and English. Further we have also reinforced the signs for the tourist cabins that are open during the winter with an extra sign in order to make it easier to locate the cabin. The visitor cabins are equipped with suitable information that among others mentions the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

Laponiatjuottjudus has in 2016 mounted our new signs for directions in the mountain area, including Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks.

The national Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for mountain safety issues. To assist in the work of mountain safety EPA has a council consisting of representatives from government agencies and organizations with a vast knowledge and experience of the mountains and mountain safety. In the mountain regions there are local mountain safety committees that works as an extension of the council. Laponiatjuottjudus is a member of one local mountain safety committee and hence takes part of the work with preventive measures in mountain safety.

In 2015 the four research cabins built in the beginning of the 20's century, by Professor Axel Hamberg, in Sarek National Park was proclaimed as national historic buildings. These cabins are historically important from both a scientific and cultural point of view as well as a contribution to climate research. During 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus has begun the restoration of one of the cabins that was in worst condition. We have also carried out smaller maintenance work on the other cabins.

Laponiatjuottjudus has during 2016 continued the large work of register and update the status of every path and construction in the National Parks. We have to prioritize and maintain updated plans of maintenance for the paths and constructions in the parks. In 2016 different trails and bridges in the

mountain area have been renovated and improved in order to maintain accessibility and safety. We have also carried out smaller maintenance work on different visitor cabins in the area. This is an ongoing work that will require the field staffs attention every year.

In 2016 Laponiatjuottjudus has continued working with the task of developing our website. This is an ongoing process. In addition to the fact that the whole Laponia area of 9400 km<sup>2</sup> is a World Heritage, it also consists four National parks and two Nature reserves. Therefore we present information about all our different protected areas within the World Heritage. In the information about Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks we announce that the area is awarded with European Diploma. In addition to Laponia's own homepage we also collaborate with SEPA and provide information to their website concerning Sweden's National Parks ([www.sverigesnationalparker.se](http://www.sverigesnationalparker.se)).

## 55. SWEDEN – STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK

**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.

No conditions are listed in the Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)14 on the renewal of the European Diploma.

No conditions are listed in the Resolution (88)11 on the award of the European Diploma.

Therefore, there are no conditions to be explained.

**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. *Hydrological survey and completion of management plan:* During 2016 we have installed new equipment for measuring the water levels in the park. The new equipment will measure the water level every day. It will give us much better data on the hydrological situation. The data will be the basis for improved management in lake Kävsjön (se p. 2 below)

The management plan and updated regulations was decided by the Swedish EPA in November 2015.

The task with the new, improved and modern management is therefore concluded. During 2016 we have started the work with fulfill all that is stated in the plan.

2. *Changing inflow of water to Lakes Häradsösjön and Kävsjön:* No changes in inflow have been recorded during 2016 but the situation is not favorable for the birdlife or the habitats in or around the lakes. The new management plan includes better management actions for the water flow in and out of the lakes. During 2016 we have started working on management actions, including the new water level measurement equipment. The plan for exactly what actions we need to do and how they should be done will be concluded during 2017.

3. *Monitor the situation of bark beetles (Ips typographus):* The bark beetles are not a problem in the park or in the surrounding forests any more. No actions have been undertaken other than a constant readiness for new storms or bark beetle (or other insects) infestations.

4. *Promote scientific research:* We actively cooperate with universities in Sweden and Europe but the interest from their part is still low. We have limited resources to conduct scientific research on our own so cooperation with other organizations is desirable. Store Mosse is part of the nationwide research projected conducted by the SEPA but it so far only covers certain habitats in the park. We try to be open for ideas when different universities contact us.

5. *Pursue the work on extending the protected area:* All remaining issues regarding land ownership are completed. All land within the park is state owned. But that only solves problem within the park. The process of establishing a nature reserve in the adjacent Långö Mosse and previous Lake Svanasjön is concluded. The decision was taken 2016-05-19. The land within that nature reserve is the same hydrological system as the National park.

**2. 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.

The funding situation for 2016 are really good. The grants for managing the national park in all its aspects has increased with nearly 20 %. We have therefore been able to increase the management of both the nature habitats and the arrangements for visitors. We expect the funding to be at same high level during 2017.

One park ranger ended his employment during February but in a relatively short period of time we could find a replacement.

**3. 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.

As stated above, all the remaining issues regarding land ownership are solved. All land within the park boundaries are state owned, as it should be according to Swedish law.

After these corrections is there no unresolved difficulties concerning boundaries of the National park.

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

In august we were visited by Mr. Pierre Galland who did an on-the-spot appraisal as part of the European Diploma renewal process. Our European Diploma is up for revision in 2018. I believed we had two interesting days filled with good discussions. It was a pleasure to show Mr Galland the national park and hear his thoughts and ideas about the conservation, management and monitoring. We are looking forward to see his report and recommendations. The recommendations and hopefully a renewed Diploma will be important for discussions about funding for management during 2018 – 2028.

As usual have much time and resources focused on maintaining our structures for visitors. We have built two new trails to the visitor's center. The trails are mainly for bicycles to reduce the need of bicycling on the main road that have heavy traffic. It drastically increases the possibilities for schools to visit the park. One of the trails were inaugurated on European Day of Parks in May 2016 and the other one will be inaugurated in 2017. The trails have been built with a lot of work from volunteers and partly financed from the local municipalities. It has increased the local awareness of the parks existence.

We have also started the large project with implementing the new Swedish brand for national parks in our park. The work includes completely new trail signs, information signs, signs at parking places, trail markings etc, and also a new information folder. In all it is more than 250 different signs. The project will be ongoing until 2018.

We have started the work on extending our buildings for management (i.e. garage, workshop, storage etc.) The work will be concluded in 2017.

One of the managers attended the Europarc Conference in Switzerland and an interesting workshop discussing MIDAS (Multiple International Designated Areas). The issues discussed were very relevant



for Store Mosse National Park since we both are Natura 2000, Ramsar, National Park and have the European Diploma. As a result of that meeting we have started the work on how we can present the different stakeholders and their logos on our website and printed material in an informative and good looking way. The work will be concluded in 2017.

## **56. SWITZERLAND – SWISS NATIONAL PARK (SNP)**

### **1. Conditions**

In the letter addressed to federal councillor Doris Leuthard on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012, concerning the successful renewal of the European Diploma for the Swiss National Park (SNP), no conditions were mentioned.

### **2. Recommendations**

#### **2.1. Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair Parc Naziunal**

"Prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour remplir la condition posée par l'UNESCO, qui demande que le parc national qui constitue le coeur de la réserve de la biosphère "Biosfera Val Müstair/Parc Naziunal" soit entièrement entouré par une zone tampon"

As stated in the 2015 Annual Report, endeavours are being made to obtain the definitive recognition by UNESCO of the biosphere reserve based on the partnership of the three parties involved, i.e. SNP and the communities of Val Müstair and Scuol (the latter with part of its territory). In accordance with the new spatial prerequisites the name of the institution has been adapted: we now talk about the "Engiadina Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve".

In September 2016 the entire dossier, including the integral management plan, was submitted, via the relevant authorities in Chur and Bern, to UNESCO in Paris; in the meantime it has arrived at its destination. We await the decision as to the definitive designation or (possibly with conditions) continued recognition of the Engiadina Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve in the first half of 2017.

Territorial development of protected zones poses major challenges within the framework of Swiss (direct) democracy. We trust that UNESCO will recognise the steps already taken and will exercise leniency with regard to the non-fulfilment of the original demand for a surrounding buffer zone. With the reappointment and increase in the position of biosphere reserve director (commencing 01.01.2017) we are manifesting our intent to swiftly proceed with the further development of the project. The new location of the office in Scuol should also generate impetus for regional development in the Engadine, and help to promote wider acceptance of the biosphere reserve.

#### **2.2. Human resources and "100-year SNP" jubilee**

"Veiller à ce que le personnel soit assez nombreux pour satisfaire aux exigences actuelles et prévoir des moyens supplémentaires suffisants pour faire face aux célébrations du centenaire en 2014"

The National Park jubilee in 2014 was in every sense a resounding success, and now belongs to history.

#### **2.3. Communication concerning large predators**

"Continuer à sensibiliser la population locale, les municipalités et les visiteurs au retour des grands carnivores en travaillant en étroite coopération avec le service de la chasse et de la pêche du canton des Grisons"

Being a scientist who has previously spent many years on the subject of the lynx, the writer is concerned that the ground for large predators in the SNP (and the surrounding area) must be carefully prepared. As early as 1997 we took a step in this direction with the setting up of an ongoing permanent exhibition entitled "Uors in Engiadina/Auf den Spuren der Bären" in the Schmelzra Museum in S-charl (on the eastern boundary of the SNP). In 2009 an edition of our National Park magazine "Cratschla" was dedicated to the theme of the lynx. Needless to say every opportunity is made use of to inform the public

about large predators. In this context, within our 2016 NATURAMA programme of talks, we organised a (well visited) talk focussing on the wolf. However, we have no direct involvement with these creatures, since for many years their occurrence within the park and its surrounding area has only been migratory. Relations with the cantonal Office for Hunting and Fishing are excellent, with a positive outcome at various levels.

#### 2.4. Impact of the Pass dal Fuorn road

"Etudier, avec les différents ministères ou administrations concernés, la possibilité de limiter au minimum l'impact de la route qui franchit la Pass dal Fuorn"

Special attention was given to the problem of traffic on the Pass dal Fuorn road during 2016. Primarily, measures were taken to improve the safety of National Park visitors in all parking areas and in those places where they have to cross the road. For the 2016 season temporary traffic calming arrangements were installed, which included speed limits and warning signs in the vicinity of the 3 parking areas situated beside the road. Up to now the measures introduced seem to have produced positive results.

In close collaboration with the cantonal authorities responsible, and the community of Zernez, the conditions for a definitive solution as of 2017 have been established: two parking areas will be abolished, and another area enlarged. In addition, seasonal (01.06 – 30.10.) speed restrictions (60 km/h) will be put in place as well as warning signs at 4 parking areas, alongside further structural measures such as defined entrances and exits, as well as minor relocation of footpaths close to road crossings.

It is hoped that these measures to heighten safety will greatly contribute to slowing down traffic and thereby also the reduction of noise emissions. Road traffic restrictions are not easy to implement at the political level. Already this year's provisional measures met with fierce opposition. Every effort is being made to find a dialogue and acceptable conditions in order to establish the implementation of definitive measures.

#### 2.5. Collaboration with Stelvio National Park

"Poursuivre l'étroite coopération avec le Parc national voisin de Stelvio"

Over the years the collaboration established between our two parks has been intensified and works satisfactorily. Population counts and territory controls are conducted jointly. Of particular interest is the chamois blindness, which continues to be an ongoing topic on both sides of the border. This highly contagious disease seems to have died away in the ibex population; locally it has decreased in the chamois population, but has spread within new regions (also in the SNP). This illness occurs in both mountain ungulates; it does not fundamentally endanger the populations.

#### 2.6. SNP Extension

"Etudier la possibilité d'élargir la zone diplômée à l'ensemble de la réserve de la biosphère"

The enlargement of the SNP (e.g. biosphere reserve core zone) has for many years been a prime concern for the author of this report. In the year 2000 the Macun plateau and lakes (3.6 km<sup>2</sup>) were successfully integrated into the Park. At present any further increase in surface area is politically unlikely. Though the SNP is greatly appreciated by the local population – not merely for its ecological benefits, but rather more for the economic advantages it brings – the idea of any further enlargement is not generally accepted by the population concerned.

### 3. Site Management

There were no problems within the National Park administration during the current year. With the exception of the above-mentioned chamois blindness in the SNP, no great changes occurred in the natural environment of the National Park. As a wilderness area, where the protection of natural processes is guaranteed, we anyway take no action when natural changes occur (apart from a few exceptions).

The Federal National Park Commission (ENPK) continues its work under its new president Franz-Sepp Stulz, as well as some partial changes in personnel that include a new accounting officer. In the course of a daylong workshop and an ordinary meeting the basis for new strategic guidelines were laid down. These will become effective in 2017.

#### 4 Boundaries

No changes

#### 5. Other Information

For our protected area, to be awarded the European Diploma over decades is an honour as well as recognition of its importance. Of course we take the opportunity to communicate this wherever and whenever appropriate (e.g. [www.nationalpark.ch](http://www.nationalpark.ch)).

The following sections (6.–11.) have not been filled in because the next renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas will be not until 2022.

#### 57. TURKEY - KUŞCENNETI NATIONAL PARK

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.

-Site management is appropriately carried out by Administration Unit as part of the Ramsar Convention, Wetland Management Plan and 2873 Law of National Parks. Kuşçenneti Milli Parkı Longterm Development Plan and Wetland Management Plan are prepared. To finalize the transaction, meeting with stakeholders is proceeding.

- Regular monitoring the breeding bird population in the park is carrying out both general places and also particularly Sigirci and Kocaçay Delta.

- The water quality of the lake and of the streams is controlling regularly by National Park management authority and also Research Institutions. National Park Administration is working close cooperation with Local Administrations, Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization and Provincial Directorate of Food Agriculture and Livestock. On the other hand, Water Level issues, 2016 year generally was an arid period for our region, but this problem was an advantage for natural fluctuations in the lake's water level.

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.

- **The evaluation of the wetland management plan for 2011-2015 and the adopting of the management plan;** Revision of Wetland Management Plan met on Provincial Wetlands Commission meeting. Revision Plan is still in progress.

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.

There is no change in terrestrial and water surface.

During 2015, some of the investments have been implemented in the national park:

-10 new nests are built for great white pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) into the lake, and nests are placed in the field.

- The road that are reached to the national park, sign and information boards are renewed by Bandırma Municipality. Car parking area is designed. In addition, Sewerage, construction of village roads and landscaping is renewed in Kuşçenneti village where is near the national park.

- The motor boat was bought, in this way controls have been easier into the lake for poaching issues. Besides, 2 lawn mowers and 2 leaf collecting machines were bought.

-1 Forest guard officers appointed to work in the national park. Besides, within the scope of a Program for the Benefit of Society 9 persons were employed between May and October in the this year.

- Perious year water tank (60 tons) were constructed for irrigation in the field. In this year water tank (40 tons) was added.

- The roof of visitor center is totally renewed.

- We provide logistical support to Balıkesir University, Environmental Engineering Department Students who prepared dissertation issued Monitoring Water Quality in Manyas Lake.

**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.

There is no change in the boundary of National Park.

**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.

## 58. UKRAINE – CARPATHIAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

**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. continue efforts to provide the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve with more appropriate funding and to raise more additional funds from external sources;*

Funding of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is accomplished by means of the State Budget of Ukraine according to the valid Legislation. At the same time, costs from local budgets, charity funds, institutions, organizations and citizens or other sources are not forbidden by the Law and may be involved.

Most of the annual budget go for scientific research, conservation activities, and ecotourism facilities development. Within last 4 years two new visitor centres were opened; the government has already funded the elaboration of the technical-planning documentation for constructing the International Capacity Building and Research Centre for primeval forests and alternative energy sources. The co-funding for the aforementioned Centre will be fulfilled by the German cooperation program based on agreement with the Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources of Ukraine; further construction is also planned to be funded through successful fundraising. A so-called “zero stage” of the construction process (building ground preparations) has been launched back in 2015. By the end of 2016 the situation with next funds transfer from the government will be known.

There's an annual growth of budget. In 2014 it was 13 048 460, and 14 243 208 in 2015 of the state budget. While in 2016 the budget allocated for CBR by the government constitutes 14 312 400 UAH which equals to 478 000 Euro.

So, according to the agreement between the Ministries of environment of Germany and Ukraine the German-funded cooperation program will start granting ca. 8 000 000 Euro for the capacity-building of the protected area network in Ukraine. CBR is one of the 8 PAs selected for participation in this project during the next 5 years. This is the biggest fundraising element at the moment, as the budget assigned to CBR is ca 1.8 mio Euro. In May 2016 the inception phase of the project has started with numerous meetings with the project team. Now the inception report is being prepared by the project manager and will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine, and then the action plan with first-need measures for infrastructure upgrade and

***2. accelerate liaison with the authorities of Romania so as to complete the process of establishing a transfrontier Biosphere Reserve within the next two to three years;***

An important objective for CBR is to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve "The Maramures Mountains" together with the Romanian partner - the Maramures Mountains Nature Park. This activity is envisaged by "The strategy of the Carpathian Convention implementation" adopted by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 11-p on January 16, 2007.

The first version of the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) and Maramures Mountains Nature Park (Romania) in 2009. The MoU envisages establishment of the transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures mountain range, and it clearly regulates interaction of the parties and provides a roadmap for future steps to be undertaken to reach this goal.

In 2014 CBR together with the Romanian partners finished participation in the international project BIOREGIO-Carpathians. One of the important issues for us was to establish the TBR in the Maramures Mts. We have held a number of bilateral meetings.

Also a renewed Memorandum of Understanding with more items specifically for TBR establishment in it was signed in 2014.

In 2016 the Romanian side was actively working with the communities which are supposed to become a part of the TBR. The MoU between the Maramures county (RO) and the Rakhiv district and Transcarpathian regional administration (UA) was signed. One of the items of these Memorandums is the organization of the International Conference "The role of the future TBR in conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the region". The conference is to be held in 2017.

***3. pay more attention to the elaboration and implementation of clear strategies and actions plans for the development of co-ordinated green activities around the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, working in close co-operation with the local stakeholders and in line with the presidential guidance;***

Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (CBR) refers to the so-called old biosphere reserves established even before the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework (Regulations) of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves MAB UNESCO. At the time of establishment in 1993, it was a classical protected area and had a cluster structure, which included the 8 isolated massifs, separated from each other by hundreds of kilometers. That structure of CBR fully met the main objectives of the biosphere reserve to preserve the pristine natural systems of standards and their monitoring. Actually this first concept of biosphere reserves was noted down in the Law of Ukraine "On Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine", which has been adopted in 1992 and operates with some changes today. Following the adoption of the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework (Regulations) of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves MAB UNESCO CBR territory ceased to meet the criteria of these documents the was noted in the Guidelines

of Coordinating Council of UNESCO "Man and the Biosphere" in the first periodic review of CBR in 2003. The administration of CBR existing at that time, following the abovementioned recommendations, made several attempts to resolve the territorial issue of the CBR via the expansion of the protected area. As a result, during more than a 10-year period there was only a slight increase of the CBR territory to reduce its clusterized spatial structure. In other words essentially the problem was not solved and CBR was in danger of exclusion from the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. This was given to CBR administration in the decisions of 22<sup>n</sup> meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves from 18-21 January 2016, where it was clearly stated that the "Advisory Committee concluded that in the absence of transitional areas and to the completion of the revision of zoning, the reserve not meet the criteria for Statutory framework (Regulations) of the World network of biosphere reserves. Moreover, the desire at any price to expand CBR territory as protected areas has led to misunderstandings and conflicts with local communities, which created a lot of obstacles to solving this problem in the future.

Current administration of CBR headed by the director Mr. M. Rybak realized the fallacy of all actions of the previous administration's attempts to address the mismatch between the territorial structure and zoning of CBR. The old strategy to solve the problem of this non-compliance was only in expanding the boundaries of CBR as a classical Ukrainian protected area that has numerous limitations on environmental management in accordance with the law. This strategy was ineffective and pulled a strain in relations with local and regional communities and key stakeholders, as it envisaged the withdrawing of significant traditional land areas from their daily use and limiting access to vital resources for local communities, which lead to the massive conflict of interest. Instead, it was taken as a clear course to create a transition area outside the territory of CBR, one that is defined and Statutory Framework (Regulations) for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves MAB UNESCO. There was taken an unambiguous decision that the formation of the abovementioned transition area should be done completely voluntarily and on the basis of full transparency of the process. This approach was the only possible condition for creating the of CBR transition area, which would fully meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework for BR, and which was based on a mutually beneficial cooperation between CBR administration and all stakeholders.

*4. provide the Council of Europe with adequate and detailed figures, information and data on the legislation concerning the wolf (Canis lupus) in Ukraine and the enforcement of that legislation in the country, especially with regards to Article 6 of the Bern Convention; the State Party should be urged to report on this issue to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention at its next meeting, and encouraged to strengthen its efforts on reducing the poaching activities in and around the Diploma-holding area;*

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Protection of wildlife" and "On Environmental Protection" wolf as wild forest animal are an integral part of forest ecosystems and the State property. Fact that wolf lives in more than one region of Ukraine, commits to apply to him the status of a natural resource of national importance.

In 1994, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention implies that the wolf should be protected as an animal that exists here in in-situ conditions, ie in its native wild.

In 1996, the Parliament ratified the Berne Convention with reservations, one of which relates to the wolf: "Ukraine is allowed in limited quantities, in terms of the appropriate control on such species listed in Annex II to the Convention: selective regulation of wolf (Canis lupus) number ...".

According to the "Regulations on hunting and procedures of Hunting" (1996), the wolf listed as game animals. It can be hunted from early November to late March. However, despite the fact that the intensity withdrawal of wolves is highest among hunting animals (over 80% of the population, and in some parts of the Ukrainian range to 100%), limits for shooting a wolf are not provided.

Till now the Order of the State Forestry Committee of Ukraine № 121 "On measures for the extermination of harmful wild animals" (1997) is valid. According the Order wolf also classified as harmful wild animal. The Law of Ukraine "On Hunting Economy and Hunting" (2000) also doesn't contains any kinds of restrictions on the extermination of wolves.

Ukraine's obligation to provide "appropriate control" on the wolf as a species included in Appendix II of the Bern Convention and "selective regulation of the wolf" requires changes in national legislation of Ukraine. It must be brought into line with international instruments for the protection of nature and international commitments undertaken by Ukraine.

For a comprehensive solution the problem of preservation and regulation of the wolf population in Ukraine a state program that provides comprehensive research and adequate funding is needed. Such a program could be a National Action Plan for the Wolf, proposals for which are developing now in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

*5. devote priority efforts to the monitoring and conservation of the European mink and to the control of the population of the American mink within the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve;*

In the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve only European mink is revealed. The state of its population is monitored. Every year there is 1-2 individuals in Chornohirske and Kevelivske divisions. Special measures to restore the population size in the reserve is not carried out due to lack of special funding.

*6. follow up the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations made in the reports on inventory and monitoring, and on the challenges and solutions for the management of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, published in 2008 and 2011, giving the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve the capacity to undertake these;*

CBR's territory consists of five semi-detached massifs and three isolated nature reserves creating a cluster or 'archipelago-like' structure which challenges long-term connectivity between the areas. The southern areas are located at the Romanian border connecting to Romanian protected areas such as the Maramureş Mountains Nature Park. Conservation management beyond the EU-border poses a particular challenge. CBR's functional territorial zoning comprises the core zone (strict protection) and three zones where extensive land uses like selective logging, grazing, picking of berries and mushrooms and hay-making are allowed in a restricted regime.

Much efforts and resources are directed onto monitoring of the reserve's status and nature conservation of the study on the environmental impact of human activities. The monitoring is fulfilled by the scientific department of the reserve which comprises of botanical, zoological, forest science laboratories, and also a special laboratory of ecological monitoring; there is also a special department of research and sustainable development which is also obliged to analyze scientific data and monitor development within the reserve and the vicinity. Annually a volume of Chronicles of Nature is issued by the institution based on the results of research and monitoring conducted by researchers in field and by rangers. The data are analysed and presented in this main report.

As for the monitoring, the system of data collection is based on daily field visits by rangers in charge of the area, and also on scheduled visits fulfilled by the scientists working within the scientific department of CBR.

*7. strengthen co-operation with the local socio-economic stakeholders, including the forest and the tourism sectors, and develop specific awareness pilot activities targeted on them; these activities should address the issue of climate change, and promote local adaptation measures to global warming, including alternative socio-economic measures, such as schemes for green tourism, carbon sequestration and payment for ecosystem services.*

Since 2013 the CBR Coordination Council is working at CBR. According to the Regulations about the coordination council it meets no less than once a year for discussing major community – protected area interaction aspects, cooperation possibilities and mitigation of the conflicts of interests. The Council is made up of core scientists and rangers of CBR together with the main stakeholders from the territory of CBR activity. In April 2015 the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the council took place. The stakeholders who are members of the Council are the representatives of the State Forestry Enterprises, tourism sector, agricultural cluster and regional decision makers.

One of the first joined pilot activities with the local authorities is launching of the demonstrative alpine sheep farm, which would combine modern approaches in energy efficiency and principles of sustainability with the traditional practices of sheep keeping. The concept was presented at the CBR Scientific-Technical Board meeting at the end of 2016 and was welcomed unanimously. The concrete planning meetings with cost estimations will be held in 2017.

**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.

**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.

During last year traditional nature use actions (Haymaking and willows cutting) have been carried out in “Narcissi Valley” massif to maintain meadow plants communities and conservation of *Narcissus angustifolius* population. Activities aimed for the hydrological balance restoration have been started in this protected massif. The situation had been disturbed here before the area became protected. 3 hydrological constructions (flood-gates) were maintained on drainage channels.

A complex inventory of hunting fauna was held in 2015. It proved that the number of ungulates is stable.

Protection of the territory is fulfilled by 147 (end of 2015) field rangers, who are responsible for keeping to the nature-protection regime.

Inspection and maintenance of 10.0 km of fire-resisting roads was done in 2015 and 61 km of fire-break lines were repaired. Mobilization plan for fire extinguishment for each of the department has been elaborated. No wild fires were registered during the year.

The rangers of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve working in field divisions have renovated 29 km of mountain paths and trails, and 27 km of tourism trails were freshly marked (10 km out of them are on a new hiking trail).

**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 since 2014

**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.



CBR actively disseminates information about the European Diploma during all meetings and presentations, at all reports and information booklets about the reserve.

The European Diploma logo is used in presentations and in information materials.

## **59. UNITED KINGDOM – BEINN EIGHE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

**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.

The new Reserve Plan has been completed, reviewed and will soon be a working document. An operational plan which outlines the detail on how each individual project will be delivered was reviewed.

Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands NNR is well known as a special place with stunning scenery and iconic Scottish wildlife where people are welcome to explore and get involved.

Our aspirations for Beinn Eighe NNR when we first started woodland management, 85 years ago, have now become a reality. The Reserve supports a thriving western pinewood, regenerating naturally with the planted woodlands well on the way to resembling the ancient remnants in structure and variety of species. Working alongside our neighbour's, this integrated approach to woodland restoration has resulted in 1000 hectares of near continuous native woodland in Wester Ross.

The open habitats, particularly the heaths are some of the best examples of their type in the West of Scotland. Active management has improved their overall condition throughout the Reserve and our trials to expand the areas of juniper and moss-rich heaths have been a real success story. All of our habitat work has been achieved in the presence of a well-managed deer population without the use of deer fencing.

The rare species of mosses, lichens and liverworts are also flourishing together with dragonflies and other insects. Species such as water vole, pine marten, golden eagle and white-tailed eagle thrive on the Reserve, and in recent years, black-throated divers on Loch Maree have started to make a welcomed come back.

Our adaptive management approach and targeted research has helped improve important habitats and species' resilience to climate change. Monitoring has also proved invaluable to building up our programme of demonstration and training. The Reserve is renowned in the Highlands amongst land managers, conservationists and academic institutes for demonstrating best practice conservation management, and internationally amongst volunteers for providing worthwhile medium to long term volunteering opportunities.

The Reserve continues to be a high profile tourist destination, seen by many visitors as the gateway to Wester Ross and a place where everyone can come to enjoy and be inspired by nature. The visitor centre and trails car park provide a wealth of information and a variety of outdoor experiences suitable for all abilities and tastes. Other parts of the Reserve offer quiet experiences to explore and to discover nature by seeing wildlife, or simply by taking in the views and absorbing the atmosphere.

The local community are actively engaged with the Reserve and values Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands as a place to visit and enjoy, as well as one that contributes to the local economy of Wester Ross. Local schools use the Reserve as a place for learning, local volunteers play a valuable part of delivery of Reserve management and an annual events programme remains very popular.

Objective 1: Expand and enhance the quality of the native woodlands by improving the age structure, tree species diversity and connectivity with woodlands in the wider Wester Ross landscape, whilst

maintaining the genetic integrity of the Scots pine and habitats for important woodland flora and fauna communities.

Objective 2: Enhance the quality of the heaths, bogs and montane habitats on the Reserve, maintaining their extent where they are not subject to woodland expansion, distribution and associated flora and fauna communities.

Objective 3: Pro-actively manage and maintain habitats for key species of the Reserve, particularly where this can improve species survival in the wider Wester Ross landscape and increases resilience to climate change.

Objective 4: To safeguard the special qualities of the Wester Ross landscape, cultural interests and the geological features of the Reserve.

Objective 5: Undertake and facilitate research, survey and monitoring particularly where this improves our understanding and knowledge of the Reserve and its management requirements.

Objective 6: Establish the Reserve as a gateway to Wester Ross by providing a welcoming, enjoyable and high quality visitor experience whereby 85% of visitors asked rate their experience as good or above.

Objective 7: Promote awareness and enthusiasm for nature, inspire learning and exploration in ways that help people connect with and value nature more.

Objective 8: Establish Beinn Eighe & Loch Maree Islands NNR as a key resource in the Highlands, where people contribute to its management and use it sustainably through demonstration and training, volunteering and recreation.

Objective 9: To manage the land and Reserve properties responsibly following best practice and in collaboration with our neighbours.

**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.

Continue to maintain the native tree/shrub bank, as well as the tree nursery, to guarantee the genetic origins of trees planted in the reserve;

The native tree gene bank is being maintained. The following seeds were collected : Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* 200 grammes, Hazel *Corylus avellana* nuts and Birch *Betula pubescens* 100 grammesms,

Following the results of the fieldwork for site condition monitoring of upland features of interest, adapt the current deer management to limit trampling impacts from deer on dry heaths;

The deer cull now forms the main focus of management for the Reserve. Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*: 32 stags,10 hinds, 15 calves, Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*: 4 bucks, 2 does,4 kid and Sika deer *Cervus Nippon*: 6 stag.

Monitor the evolution of the American mink (*Neovison vison*) population and its propagation within the area;

Mink are routinely monitored during fieldwork. We continue to use live-catch cage traps. No mink have been recorded.

Continue to limit the development of recreational facilities in the core area of the reserve and maintain the existing facilities to the present standard; if possible, investigate ways to improve the standards of visitor facilities;

The existing visitor centre was maintained and received the public. 13,865 members of the public visited the Centre has now been refurbished and was officially opened on 9th May 2015 along with the re-furbished interpretation, trail network and a wildlife hide.

Continue to integrate and implement safety measures in management of the area, particularly checking visitor facilities for hazards and revising the reserve's fire plan;

Hazard auditing of all facilities is completed either monthly or quarterly. Reports are completed and required actions undertaken. Information is also stored centrally within SNH. The fire plan is reviewed annually

**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.

Connectivity between Beinn Eighe NNR and the Coulin SSSI/SAC pinewoods is now complete and will continue to be enhanced. 10 hectares of new woodland with 4,000 local grown trees planted.

5.5 hectares of plantation woodland improved through creation of deadwood.

7.5 hectares of non-native Lodgepole Pine removed.

**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.

Not applicable.

**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.

Attainment of the European Diploma is promoted on the Beinn Eighe page of the National Nature Reserve website. The logo is shown with a link to information pages on the Council of Europe website.

Scotland's National Nature Reserves - <http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk/>

## **60. UNITED KINGDOM - FAIR ISLE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA**

**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.

On 26th October 2016 the Fair Isle community received the news it had worked so long to achieve. Roseanna Cunningham, Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, announced the designation of the Fair Isle Demonstration & Research Marine Protected Area (MPA) - Scotland's first ever designation of this kind. The Scottish Government has now met the condition set out for renewal of the European Diploma.

MPA designation: This outcome could not have been achieved without the dedicated support of numerous organisations and individuals over a long period of time. The crucial role the Council of Europe recommendations and condition played is hugely appreciated and warmly acknowledged by the Fair Isle community and the National Trust for Scotland alike.

Thank You!

**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.

#### Events leading up to the announcement

Following the recommendation by the independent assessor that Fair Isle's Demonstration and Research MPA proposal should go ahead, Marine Scotland was instructed to put the proposal out to consultation. The consultation was launched on 1st March 2016 and ran for 12 weeks until 24th May 2016.

To coincide with this, The Fair Isle Marine Environment & Tourism Initiative (FIMETI), with financial support from the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), commissioned a short film on the MPA. Islanders, supporters and members of the fishing community joined in explaining the many benefits anticipated from the MPA. This film is still available at <https://vimeo.com/157135778>. Publicity about the consultation was done through [www.fimeti.org](http://www.fimeti.org) and through sharing of information by the community and supporters in various modern and traditional media. Formal public consultation events were also held on and off the isle, with fishing groups, local government, governmental and non-governmental organisations in attendance.

Individual responses to the consultation are held in confidence but it was clear that there was an overwhelming response in favour, and that included the various fishermen's organisations and a number of international correspondents.

In June, Marine Scotland held drop-in sessions in Fair Isle, Lerwick (Shetland) and Kirkwall (Orkney) to obtain further views and comments from interested parties.

**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.

#### FIMETI structure

The positive outcome of the consultation prompted Nick Riddiford (NR), who had steered the initiative from the start, to retire from that role. The initial impetus had come from a community concern in 1999 about the marine resource. The NTS commissioned NR to make a preliminary evaluation about the resource, its values to the community and threats to its long term well-being. This was converted to a full community initiative, The Fair Isle Marine Environment & Tourism Initiative (FIMETI) in 1995. Twenty-seven years is a long time and NR recognised that it was time to hand over to new blood, bringing his involvement to an end in December 2015.

#### What happens next?

In the interim, the steering of FIMETI and the lead role in taking the MPA forward has been assumed by Fiona Mitchell (Fair Isle Community Chair), Dr Susannah Parnaby (Fair Isle Bird Observatory (FIBOT)) and Kerri Whiteside (Scottish Marine Community Officer, Fauna & Flora International (FFI)).

At the heart of the Marine Protected Area proposal was a desire for a community-led approach to marine protection. In its current format the Steering Committee would include six organisations representing fishing organisations, six organisations representing conservation/marine and land management organisations (the Observatory and National Trust for Scotland having a particular isle focus), and just two, FIMETI and the Fair Isle Community Association (FICA), representing the voice of the community.

This has brought the role of FIMETI and FICA into question. As unincorporated community organisations neither FICA nor FIMETI have the capacity to employ staff or the leverage to access the

required level of funding to support the Marine Protected Area. The recently formed Fair Isle Development Company (FIDC) has a structure that would enable it to employ a project officer. However, taking on a substantial additional workload would detract from its ability to deliver on other isle projects and could lead to competition for funding sources between the MPA and on-isle development projects.

Discussions between Fiona Mitchell, Susannah Parnaby (both of whom represent current points of contact for the MPA), Ian Best (Chairman of Fair Isle Development Company), Nick and Elizabeth Riddiford (FIMETI) and Kerry Whiteside (FFI) have therefore centered on the creation of a new body capable of taking on the role of project manager. This would also enable the Observatory and The National Trust for Scotland to function as independent isle-connected organisations on the Steering Committee, and does not preclude the Community Association acting as a separate isle representative on the Steering Committee if this was deemed appropriate.

It is envisaged that this new organisation (name still to be determined but potentially the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation or similar) would take the form of either a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) or company limited by guarantee with charitable status, depending on which form was felt to be the most suitable, to sit under the umbrella of the Fair Isle Community Association in a similar manner to the FIDC.

Now that an announcement has been made work can progress on obtaining funding to cover the salary of a project officer for two years, ideally, but not definitely based on the isle. Kerry Whiteside has been working to find potential sources of income, with an internal funding bid likely to provide a start point from which to lever match funding from other sources.

Kerry Whiteside continues to provide invaluable support and advice and has already begun the process of drawing in research groups to enhance the Demonstration & Research credentials of the MPA.

Early results included Marwin Buresch from Edinburgh University, visiting the isle in summer 2016 to undertake MSc research aimed at identifying knowledge gaps and recommending future research. Meanwhile Glasgow University is putting together a funding proposal to conduct seabed monitoring. They will be working with other communities as well as Fair Isle. Glasgow University is also exploring whether there are benefits in the involvement of 'Earthwatch Institute' for MPA projects, which offers support under the heading of Collaborative Ecological Research.

#### Support and dissemination

Elizabeth Riddiford continues to keep MPA news up to date on the FIMETI website [www.fimeti.org.uk](http://www.fimeti.org.uk) and facebook. These communication media have proved effective at reaching a wider audience and achieving good positive responses. It is anticipated that once a new MPA project body is in place these media sites will be handed over to or replaced by similar outlets maintained by the new structure.

#### Petition to the Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament Petitions Committee (SPPC) has been informed of the MPA decision. The petition, signed by the entire Fair Isle community, asked the SPPC to respect the Council of Europe resolution for a Fair Isle MPA. We can now state that the Scottish Government has fulfilled that resolution.

**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.

Non

**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.

There have been some changes in The National Trust for Scotland's structure management which took effect during November 2016.

These changes see Christopher Cassels ([ccassels@nts.org.uk](mailto:ccassels@nts.org.uk) – 01416162266) appointed as National Operations Manager and Duncan Stevenson ([dstevenson@nts.org.uk](mailto:dstevenson@nts.org.uk)) appointed as Fair Isle Property Manager.

## 61. UNITED KINGDOM – MINSMERE NATURE RESERVE

**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.

There were no conditions attached to the renewal of the European Diploma.

**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. The control of the invasion of bracken using mechanical means should be continued; if necessary very selective spraying of chemical products should be carried out and careful records of this kept:**

Bracken control continued to restore and enhance areas of lowland heather Heathland and dry acid grassland. Some treatment with Asulox was undertaken with full records maintained on reserve file. No mechanical bracken litter removal was undertaken this year, but funding has been sought for works planned for the period 2017 -19.

**2. A contingency plan to deal with the issue of sea level rise and increased freshwater flooding of the grazing marshes should be drawn up; in the short term, the feasibility of preventing/limiting the risk of saltwater entering the reedbed and lagoon systems by building up existing internal banks should be studied; in the longer term, a strategy for sustainable management of the coast in conjunction with all key stakeholders should be developed; discussions with the Environment Agency to reduce the risk of freshwater flooding through modification of the Minsmere sluice should be continued:**

The Minsmere Coastal and Climate Change Adaptation Plan was initiated. This project is to develop a strategic plan for managing coastal and climate change at RSPB Minsmere.

It will incorporate planned adaptation of habitats and species, as well as visitor infrastructure, and is currently going through due RSPB project processes Draft objectives for the Project are as follows:

- i) To ensure that the freshwater habitats at RSPB Minsmere are protected *in situ* for as long as it is environmentally and technically sustainable to do so.
- ii) To develop a plan to adapt the site to predicted change over the long term (around 100 years) by identifying management options which maximize the ecological potential of new and adapting habitats enabling a gradual transition from freshwater to more brackish and saline habitats.
- iii) To identify likely requirement for further compensatory habitat (in addition to that already being developed for North Marsh).

- iv) To plan suitable habitat for some key existing species & potential new colonists such as: black-winged stilt, spoonbill, purple heron, great white egret, night heron and glossy ibis.
- v) To develop a plan which maintains habitat quality and supports populations of significant importance such that the site continues to merit its current designations as a SSSI, SPA, SAC, Ramsar site.
- vi) To minimize financial and reputational risks by managing the concerns of RSPB members and the general public and maximizing future opportunities for public engagement by planning to adapt and improve visitor facilities

The freshwater feed project funded by the Environment Agency was completed. Excess water from the main reedbed area is now collected in two newly cleared out pools, these act as a reservoir to feed East Scrape. Water levels in the main reedbed continue to be maintained at the optima agreed in the management plan from January to September (subject to climatic conditions).

The new footpath proposed under Coastal Access legislation, designed to create a connecting public footpath around the coast of England, was progressed. A site visit was held on 5 May 2016 to discuss options for routes across the site. This included potential options to replace the current route across the dune system that may be lost when the sea eventually breaks through into North Marsh.

There were no significant storm surges during the period.

**3. The reserve management plans (2008-2013 and 2013-2018) should be implemented:**

All scheduled priority one projects were implemented.

**4. The purchase of land should be continued:**

There were no land purchases this year, but the RSPB has been negotiating with a partnership consortium with respect to a significant land purchase that would extend the Minsmere and Dingle Marshes reserves complex. It is hoped to complete this purchase in time for the next annual report.

**5. Vigilance with regard to alien species of flora, especially controlling and managing pirri-pirri bur, (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*) should be maintained, and the control of the American mink (*Mustela vison*) should be continued:**

The control/eradication of pirri-pirri-bur control remains a challenge and further work is needed to identify the most successful method(s). Seed heads were collected when seen but the differing chemical treatments have had mixed results (34.8 Ha boom sprayed by contractor with Forefront T under a Natural England derogation and 21.6 Ha covered by spot treatment with Roundup Biactive). Many small plants continue to occur each year, probably as a result of germinating seed. RSPB Reserves Ecology staff are to visit in December 2016 to offer further advice and guidance regarding conducting further trials using different chemicals and varying timing of application.

There were occasional ad hoc records of mink at Minsmere, but no mink were recorded on the mink rafts. The population appears to be very low and efforts to eliminate this species will continue.

**6. The role of the reserve as a demonstration site for a wide range of audiences, especially formal school parties, and for informal education/awareness-raising activities for children and families should be developed:**

Eighty one schools and colleges participated in the reserve's formal education programme, attended by 2753 children. We have continued to develop our Secondary School programmes and now offer a much more comprehensive set of curriculum focused sessions and students have taken part in practical ecological sampling in a range of habitats including collecting data that will feed in to a monitoring project for the management of invasive species. The newly revised Primary School programmes have been received well by all groups with good positive comments from many new and long standing schools. Links have been maintained with the Green Light Trust and formed with a local home school network delivering sessions outside of the normal range of curriculum focussed programmes.

Minsmere 'Reedlings', a group for under 5's and their parents continues to meet once per month for seasonal fun, stories, crafts and adventures

The Minsmere Young Wardens volunteer group is now well established with older members moving on and some taking up roles within the conservation sector either in full time education or volunteering and new members coming through. This group is aimed at young people aged 13 to 18 years with an enthusiasm for wildlife and the environment. The focus is on practical, hands-on habitat management tasks and offers opportunities to increase skills in conservation management and wildlife knowledge and enables the participants to make new, like-minded friends.

During summer we hosted DigVentures – a crowd-funded archaeological team, who investigated the ruins of the original Leiston Abbey in search of evidence that the monks who lived there were involved in piratical activities. The team were able to show the public the excavations taking place each day and used the Discovery Centre to show some of the artefacts they discovered

Minsmere continues to host bespoke children's birthday parties and provide activities for local groups on request. We have continued to offer a range of family activities during school holidays with a menu of different facilitated activities such as short guided walks, pond dipping, bird ringing displays, craft activities and owl pellet dissection offered. The seasonal self-led family activities were offered all year round, providing interactive interpretation of the wildlife for visiting families and children. Each child who completes the activities received a certificate and sticker. Our evaluation has demonstrated the success of the events and activities in terms of increased levels of participation and learning amongst our family audience, as well as a source of revenue to support our conservation management work.

We continue to support learning within and beyond the RSPB in regard to our engagement with visitors. Reserve staff participate in the national RSPB Visitor Experience Workgroup, sharing best practice and developing strategy.

**7. A rotational fallowing regime on the freshwater sections of the coastal lagoons to increase invertebrate biomass for breeding and passage waders should be implemented:**

No rotational fallowing was carried out on the scrape this year. Some areas of mare's tail were cut and others left uncut on West Scrape before flooding with sea water, to see if this treatment has a marked adverse effect on the plant compared with simply flooding with sea water. Increased salinity held from beginning of August to beginning of October. Salinities held within the specified range for each lagoon with the exception of West scrape where sea water was intentionally added to inhibit the growth and spread of mare's tail, and over the winter period on North Girder where precipitation and high ditch levels mean it is very difficult to maintain the required high salinity. Benthic invertebrate biomass on the Scrape is still not meeting the target but excellent numbers of passage waders were recorded.



**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.

Matt Parrott was recruited into the vacant role of Visitor Experience Manager, joined by Amy Lever in the role of Visitor Experience Officer. The Learning Officer was supported by a seasonal Learning Assistant, Hannah Jones and a Learning Intern, Emily Burton. Seasonal catering staff were also recruited to support the cafe team through the spring & summer together with one seasonal administrative assistant

The Minsmere red deer control project continued, RSPB Reserves Ecology staff undertook a heather condition and deer impact assessment in October 2015. This indicated a reduction in browsing pressure in the central heathland areas and an increase in the proportion of pioneer heather. An increase in new tree saplings was also observed in these areas. Deer counts in autumn 2015 produced only low numbers on the dry habitats. This combination of factors led to the decision not to cull any deer in winter 2015/16. Whilst no formal surveys have been undertaken in the wetland habitats, drone footage was taken over meadow marsh and the main reedbed to gather an initial impression of deer activity in the area. This, together with other ad-hoc records, indicate that impact on the wetlands is increasing. Control is planned adjacent to reedbed, fen and lowland wet grassland habitats in winter 2016/17. Some modification to current deer impact assessment methodology is needed on the heathland as is consensus on methodology for monitoring impact in the wetland habitats. This issue will be reviewed during December 2016.

Large-scale tree removal work was undertaken through the Minsmere Heath Restoration Project. Phase 1 involved contractors felling and removing 18.7 Ha of heathland pine and birch. Brash removal will be undertaken when the Phase 2 felling works begin in 2016/7. Gorse continues to be cut (3.06 Ha) and chemically stump treated on heath at Minsmere to encourage the development of both heather and acid grassland habitats.

Phase 1 of the reedbed restoration project was a success with bed lowering, pool creation and ditch enhancement work all completed. This project created improved habitat for foraging bitterns with bittern ledges being added to 1115m of ditches across the main reedbed and north levels and new pools with bittern ledges being added at the northern end of the scrape, main reedbed and South Girder. The South Girder reedbed rejuvenation area was grazed with highland cattle and attracted a first for Britain: western swamphen. As part of the Scrape enhancement programme, work was carried out on West Scrape to improve the hydrology, remove one internal bank and create new islands.

Active rotational management of scrub within woodland areas for the benefit of nightingales is planned for the forthcoming autumn/winter period. There are also plans for additional scrub creation at Minsmere. A supplementary feeding plot for turtle doves was established but feeding had to be suspended when a pair of stone curlews attempted to breed on the plot. Liaison with the RSPB Turtle Dove Officer will continue to refine management of seeded plot and supplementary feeding methodology

Contractors ploughed and harrowed half of each of the sixteen stone curlew plots. Either electrified netting or wires were used around all the regularly used stone curlews nesting plots prior to the birds return in March, to reduce the chances of the nest being predated by ground predators. In addition, any pairs nesting off plot were likewise fenced which necessitated limited disturbance whilst the fences were erected. The plots were topped, as required, during the season to maintain open habitat for the possibility of relays and second/third broods.

**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 additional land purchases or boundary changes this year.

**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.

The BBC's 'Springwatch' & 'Unsprung' programmes were again broadcast live from Minsmere between 30 May and 16 June 2016. The BBC viewed the broadcast from Minsmere in 2016 as a great success with viewing figures topping 3 million. Both the BBC and RSPB incorporated social media to build an online community of *Springwatchers*. The reserve remained open to visitors throughout the broadcast period.

Visitor numbers for the period were 112,228 a slight decrease on the previous year – thought to be a consequence of poor weather during the spring. The presence of BBC Springwatch gave visitors an added dimension to their visit and some schools were given tours of the BBC village and filming studio.

Extensive consultations with EDF Energy continued regarding the plans to develop the Sizewell C nuclear reactor to the south of the reserve. We are continuing to work closely with EDF to understand the specific environmental implications of the Sizewell C proposal, with many aspects of the proposed development still being clarified. We are also working with them, and other key stakeholders, to address our specific concerns. The stage 2 public consultation for the project is due to start in November 2016.

Acknowledgement of the European Diploma award was included in the Reserve Leaflet which is given to all visitors to the site.

## **62. UNITED KINGDOM – PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK**

**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. Complete the review of the National Park Management Plan and continue implementation of the plans and strategies it contains.**

Implementation of the 2012 to 2017 National Park Management Plan continues and work has started on a review of the existing plan to be completed in 2017, including a more substantial update of the National Park Special Qualities. The Local Nature Partnership has published a "State of Nature" report for the Peak District to guide future nature conservation priorities and partnerships.

**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. Secure and enhance the management of existing important key conservation habitats in farmland, especially hay meadows, wetlands, limestone dales and remaining areas of lead mine rakes, particularly through advice and brokerage of agri-environment schemes in conjunction with appropriate partner organisations.**

The Authority continues to work to safeguard key habitats through negotiation of new agri-environment schemes and ensuring renewal of expiring agreements for priority sites- approximately 78% of the National Park is within agri-environment scheme agreements. The South West Peak Landscape Partnership has been successful in its delivery-stage bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the implementation of projects in the South West Peak, covering approximately ¼ of the National Park. Projects relevant to farmland habitats include Future Farmscapes, Glorious Grasslands and Slowing the Flow. A Magnificent Meadows project is being developed by a partnership of organisations locally,

contributing to a national project, and a partnership project “Pollinating the Peak”, led by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, has been launched to raise awareness of and deliver conservation benefits for pollinating insects across the Peak District.

**2. Halt and reverse the past degradation of heather moorland and blanket bog through moorland management plans, agri-environment schemes and with help from the Moors for the Future Partnership.**

The Moors for the Future Partnership (MFF) continues to co-ordinate major landscape scale delivery across moorland habitats, in particular with the launch of the €16m EU LIFE-funded MoorLIFE 2020 programme. This includes a continuation of large-scale moorland restoration including revegetation of bare peat, restoration of water levels through extensive gully-blocking, restoring active blanket bog through the reintroduction of Sphagnum mosses, and an extensive Citizen Science project. Surveys have shown a very positive response to moorland restoration by birds such as Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), with a reversal of past declines.

**3. Step up measures to address the decline in breeding populations of priority bird species, particularly lapwing, curlew and snipe on farmland.**

As part of the HLF funded landscape scale project in the South West Peak, wader populations will be addressed through habitat management and proposals for predator control. Surveys suggest some progress in addressing the long-term declines in breeding farmland waders in the SW Peak, with Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) numbers increasing. In the Dark Peak survey work has identified further hotspots for farmland waders and work continues to seek conservation agreements with land managers on these sites.

**4. Negotiate agreements to secure appropriate management of ancient and semi-natural woodland sites.**

The clough woodland project has continued to encourage the creation of native woodland across the Dark Peak. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominates the woodlands of the limestone dales and Ash Dieback poses a significant threat to the future of these internationally important woodlands. Baseline surveys to monitor the long-term impact of the disease and of woodland management to mitigate its effects have been completed. Work continues with partners to develop a strategy for diversifying these woodlands and maintaining farmland trees, and funding options for implementing this work are being explored. Survey of plantations on ancient woodland sites has been carried out to identify priorities for restoration to native woodland, in collaboration with the Woodland Trust.

**5. Implement with partners programmes to achieve the targets and objectives set out in the Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan, 2011-2020;**

Implementation continues through the range of projects and interventions outlined above.

**6. Maintain at least 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) land in favourable or recovering condition on land owned by the National Park Authority; in addition, implement measures on authority-owned land to maximise its contribution to nature conservation and cultural heritage objectives.**

The area of Authority owned SSSI land in favourable/recovering position remained at 96.3%. A report produced by the Mountaineering Council showed that work to identify and sign Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) nesting sites on and near heavily used climbing crags on the Authority’s North Lees estate had been successful in increasing nesting success.

**7. Carry out conservation and community work at a landscape scale through an integrated area-based management approach.**

In the South West Peak conservation and community work is being carried out in the development stage of the HLF funded landscape partnership scheme. The Authority continues to contribute to the Sheffield Moors Partnership. In the Dark Peak an integrated approach is co-ordinated through Moors for the Future, and the Sheffield Wildlife Trust have submitted a successful first stage bid for a “Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership”, leading to a €3.3m project to engage local communities in enhancing the National Park’s moorland fringe landscapes to the north-west of Sheffield.

**8. Implement the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the National Park and continue to work with partner organisations, local communities and English Heritage to achieve targets.**

The Authority continues to implement its Cultural Heritage Strategy, working with partners and stakeholders, including Historic England/English Heritage. Much of the Authority’s work is delivered through negotiation of agri-environment schemes and responses to planning applications. Several strands of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership focus on cultural heritage, notably “Barns & Buildings Conservation” which will encourage volunteers to record traditional field barns and provide support for landowners in restoring them; “Future Farmscapes” which will encourage environmentally and economically sustainable farming; “Peak Land Lives” which will capture and record local people’s memories of the area; and “Small Heritage Adoption” which will encourage local people and visitors to adopt and look after heritage features such as limekilns and stone crosses. Of the 2907 Listed Buildings the number at risk remains relatively constant at c.6%, and of the 470 Scheduled Ancient Monuments the number at risk remains at around 18% (of which 1.5% are at high risk).

**9. Continue to provide encouragement to small-scale economic schemes linking conservation of the environment of the Peak District to economic benefit.**

The Authority continues to champion the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark and providing advice on energy and water savings, waste management and renewables to land based businesses. A conference on geodiversity and tourism was held in partnership with East Midlands Geological Society, Natural England, Derby University and Business Peak District.

**10. Only authorise extensions of existing mineral quarries to meet essential national needs, for example, if the minerals are not available elsewhere or are needed to provide traditional building materials in the park; seek restoration of mineral quarries to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the national park.**

During the year the Secretary of State confirmed a Prohibition Order at Backdale Quarry following a Public Inquiry. After many years of uncertainty and continuing mineral extraction at this site, the Order makes it clear that mineral working cannot resume on this site, and secures restoration measures. At Ballidon Quarry, a significant limestone quarry, the Authority approved amendment of an existing permission which will allow improved long-term restoration of the site. The footprint of the quarry remains unchanged.

The majority of sites operating in the Peak District National Park undertake progressive restoration as part of their working schemes. Other sites are currently undergoing restoration or are in a period of prescriptive aftercare to bring the site to a beneficial after-use. Most restoration is designed to help the National Park achieve targets in the biodiversity action plan; for example at Shining Bank Quarry the Authority has been working with the minerals company and landowner to restore the site as a possible introduction site for White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*).

**11. Continue to develop tourism activities in a way that protects and enhances both the interests of the community and the environment and supports the local economy; ensure that the National Park Authority meets the requirements of an application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism; increase the proportion of visitors using sustainable methods of travel.**

Although not pursuing the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism we continue to work with a range of partners to pursue approaches that put into practice the aims of the Charter, including responsible event management, responsible visitor management campaigns and various sustainable transport projects. The Authority hosts the Pedal Peak project, developing rural cycle tourism.

**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.

The National Park Authority has reviewed its structure to strengthen our Leadership Group, and through it our ability to champion the special qualities of the National Park and to grow public engagement, support and income to deliver future priorities. The review provides future flexibility whilst responding to indications of better-than-expected budget settlements over the next year or two.

The implications of “Brexit” will be significant for the environment, and in particular for agricultural support. The Authority is working alongside other National Parks to ensure a secure future for issues that influence National Park objectives.

**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.

There are no boundary 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.

The Authority continues to liaise with electricity distributors regarding the undergrounding of a high voltage electricity line at Dunford Bridge, and has successfully secured funding to ameliorate the visual impacts of other high voltage lines in the Longdendale Valley.

### **63. UNITED KINGDOM – PURBECK HERITAGE COAST**

**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 terms of the agreement between Dorset County Council and British Petroleum are being strictly adhered to, and BP continues to work to the highest standards.

**The Wytch Farm oilfield is being operated by Perenco who took over from BP in 2013. A new agreement has been drafted and is being negotiated which ensures:**

**1.1 Safety in operation and controls to ensure human and environmental health**

**1.2 Environmental management of areas in the estate in direct control of the company. Significant tree clearance for the restoration of heathland has taken place in the autumn of 2016, including by horse-logging to prevent environmental damage**



**1.3 A significant contribution (£1,700,000) towards off-site environmental improvements in the landscape character areas affected, largely within the Purbeck Heritage Coast**

**1.4 Effective decommissioning and site restoration once the operation has ceased**

**This agreement is still in negotiation, however none of the principles described above are in question. Negotiation continues on the precise mechanism for ensuring compliance with 1.4. We expect the agreement to be finalised in December 2016.**

2. The extension of existing quarries or the opening of new quarries conforms to the 'exceptions' principle that they should not be permitted unless they do not impair the character of the Heritage Coast as a result of any one or a combination of the following:

- their scale and length
- their negative impact on the landscape, wildlife, the enjoyment of the area by the public or local communities
- the practical impossibility of achieving satisfactory restoration and aftercare within a period of five years following the cessation of work.

**Dorset County Council adopted a new minerals strategy in May 2014, available online (<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mcs>). This strategy sees a strengthening of policy for environmental protection, particularly for the designated areas (Purbeck Heritage Coast and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).**

**Following its adoption, Dorset County Council has been developing a Minerals Sites Plan (draft available here <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/mineral-sites>); it was consulted on between May & July 2016. A revised draft will be produced in February 2017 with a view to eventual adoption by December 2017.**

**The current draft describes a potential extension to Swanworth Quarry, northeast of Worth Matravers within the Purbeck Heritage Coast area. The Dorset AONB team believes (and has advised Dorset County Council accordingly) that development of this site would impair the character of the Heritage Coast.**

**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. Work should continue on the inventory of Natural Areas calling for more adequate protection and research on these sites, particularly in the marine reserves where the periodic inventories of fauna and flora should be continued.

**The Natural Areas inventory has been superseded by the National Character Area profiles managed by Natural England. The relevant areas are the Dorset Heaths (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4961534241406976>) and South Purbeck (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4610950>) which were completed in 2014.**

**Heritage Coast's coastal waters and Poole Harbour are Marine Protected Areas (designated / candidate European Marine Sites); data gathering and sharing is encouraged through the Dorset Environmental Record Centre. Seabed mapping and survey information is available from the Dorset Wildlife Trust <http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/doris.html>**

3. Any progress will be welcomed to reduce intensive arable use on the immediate edge of the cliffs.

**The vast majority of the Purbeck Heritage Coast's clifftop land is in Environmental Stewardship with a focus on extensification. Management agreements (10-year in length) include measures such as:**

- conservation headlands (cultivated field margins with little or no agrochemical application with great benefit to rare arable plants and arable fauna)
- grass field margins (tussocky grass margins creating buffer, habitat linkages and tussocky grassland habitat)
- arable reversion to grassland (creation of calcareous grassland)

4. Work should continue to restore eroded paths by using local stone in an innovative way as done at Lulworth Cove.

**Efforts continue in this regard led by Dorset Countryside and the Lulworth Estate. Innovative use of local stone is evident.**

5. Efforts to promote the use of more sustainable methods of transport to visitors (bus and train usage, improved use of cycling and walking and riding) should be increased.

**Dorset County Council leads work to develop the potential of the existing park and ride site at Norden near Corfe Castle. As the rail line between Wareham and Swanage is being reconnected to the main line, the Norden site can play an important part in reducing car numbers travelling to Studland.**

**The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Partnership continues to work with the private sector bus company First Bus to support and promote the X53 Jurassic Coaster bus service, which continues to serve Purbeck.**

**The Dorset AONB Partnership have won an award from the Government Department for Environment, Fisheries & Rural Affairs (Defra) to develop new cycling routes which help promote healthy travel and local produce. There will be at least one route incorporating the Purbeck Heritage Coast, to be completed by March 2017.**

6. Measures should be taken to address risks of oil pollution from shipping.



**Policy: ship-to-ship transfers in open water are now illegal; activity is policed and compliance enforced by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency.**

**Response: Dorset County Council's Emergency Planning unit runs regular Beach Masters' courses to enable an effective and efficient response to spills. No significant spills have been reported in 2016.**

7. New resources should be made available to ensure the integrity in perpetuity of the newly designated World Heritage Site and its effective presentation to the public.

**The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Partnership continues to gain support from the local authorities, communities and other stakeholders across its length. Their management structure is currently in transition between the existing local government host (Dorset County Council) and a charity (the Jurassic Coast Trust) which is being re-formed for this purpose.**

8. Appropriate management should be exercised and sufficient resourcing for this should be ensured, for the proposed South Purbeck National Nature Reserve.

**Known as Durlston National Nature Reserve, this site is owned and well managed by Dorset County Council and is deemed to be in favourable ecological condition. A new Countryside Stewardship agreement is being finalised to continue resourcing this site from ERDF-origin funds to 2026.**

9. The Heritage Landscape Management Plan for the Lulworth Estate should be implemented.

**The Lulworth HLMP continues to be implemented.**

10. Co-operation and the establishment of partnerships in management planning, action and exchange of information between all major bodies involved with conservation and management should continue as it is a key method for future management of the Coast.

**The Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area Partnership continues to deliver this function.**

**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.

**Risk: Public finance is potentially an issue; all conservation bodies are working hard to secure funds from alternative sources for the ongoing conservation of the Heritage Coast and surrounding area.**

**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.

None

**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.

None