

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 29 March 1982

SN-ZP (82) 25

AS THIS DOCUMENT WILL NOT BE
DISTRIBUTED DURING THE MEETING
PLEASE BRING THIS COPY

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



COE158737

Committee of experts -
protected areas

Berchtesgaden National Park
(Federal Republic of Germany)

Application for the award
of the
European Diploma

Bayerisches Staatsministerium
für Landesentwicklung und
Umweltfragen
Rosenkavalierplatz 2
D 8000 MÜNCHEN 81

74.638
09.3

1. Type of natural area, site or feature

The Berchtesgaden National Park is situated in the extreme south east of Bavaria. It covers an area of approximately 21,000 hectares including a part of the northern limestone Alps comprising the Watzmann massif with its highest peak (2,713 m), the Hochkalter, the Hohen Göll, the Steinere Meer and the Reiteralm. Three large valleys intersect the mountain: the valley of the Königsee, the Wimback valley and the Klausback valley.

The area is the property of the state of Bavaria. With the exception of some inns, refuges, forester's lodges and some small Alpine dairy huts, there are no settlements. On the small peninsula of St. Bartholomä in the Königsee lake is a pilgrimage church.

The plateaux are karsted rock regions; the middle and lower zones are mostly covered with woods. Economic exploitation and activity is not admitted, as a matter of principle, in the National Park of Berchtesgaden. Alp rights, a legacy from historic times, are still in force. The region has a coarse-meshed net of hiking trails; it is a recreation area for alpinists and hikers without any public road traffic.

2. Characteristics and scientific, aesthetic, cultural or recreative value justifying conservation

The national park area is of paramount significance because of its balanced ecosystem, its geological and morphological form, its unparalleled biotopes for rare plants and animals that can be found in such abundance nowhere else but here, and its unique beauty. Measures were taken for the protection of this area early enough. The first vast plant-protection zone of Bavaria was established in the southern part of the present national park in 1910. It covered an area of 8,300 hectares; this is less than half of today's national park. In 1921 this germ cell of the protected area developed into the 21,000 hectares large Königsee Nature Reserve. In 1959 the protection of plants and animals was extended to a general prohibition of any change in the environment. With slightly modified boundaries, the nature reserve of Königsee became the Berchtesgaden National Park on 1 August 1978.

a. A well-balanced ecosystem

Thanks to protective measures during more than 70 years, 80% of the national park consists of natural areas such as glaciers and nêvês, bodies of running and stagnant water, Alpine grass, moors, dwarf pines and green alder bushes as well as woodlands of a nearly natural character. They can be found mainly above the subalpine natural limit of vegetation (1400-1700 m) and the Alpine region (over 1700 m). Here dominate Alpine grass, rock crevices and rock detritus. Part of the nearly-natural woods are those on the plateaux and at altitudes above 1400 m, where sub-Alpine spruce woods and larch woods predominate.

Here extends also the mountain mixed forest zone (on slopes at heights from 700 to to 1400 m); the species are similar to those of a natural composition: spruce, fir, beech, mountain maple.

The formerly cultivated forests cannot be considered as areas of a nearly natural character. Partly, they are left to natural regeneration; partly, they are being recultivated by substituting the woods rich in spruces with more natural mixed forest. For this purpose, the hoofed game is being acclimatised to natural conditions. Biological expert opinions on the game population estimate a surplus of deer. The Berchtesgaden State Forest Authority, solely authorised to thin out game, takes care that the vegetation can develop unimpaired.

b. Geology

The national park landscape developed - as part of the northern limestone Alps - in the following pattern:

- sediments in a shallow sea basin;
- folding and elevation of the mountains;
- formation of the present relief, before and during the Ice Age;
- return of vegetation after the withdrawal of ice.

The sediments are Triassic. Coral reefs grew at the edges of the shallow sea of that time. The slowly sinking sea bottom and the sedimentation balanced each other so that the shallow sea conditions existed for millions of years. Thus, enormous sediments and coral reefs could build up interspersed with an extraordinary variety of fossils. A crosscut through the Triassic sediments gives the famous east wall of the Watzmann; the 2000 m high eastern precipice of the Watzmann towards the Königsee lake. In 1981 the hundredth anniversary of its first ascent was celebrated. An example of a mighty coral reef is the 2522 m high stock of the Hohen Göll.

c. Flora

The national park shelters a manifold flora with most varied demands on the habitats. About 50% of the total area is covered with woods. Heath (*Erica carnea*), hepatica (*Anemone hepatica*), Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*), wood spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), the white toothwort (*Dentaria enneaphyllos*), cyclamen (*Cyclamen purpurascens*) and other rare plants make up the bushes and plants of a part of these mountain woods.

Diverse species of trees grow on specific sites; they merit to be pointed out because of their rarity; especially mentioned must be the *Pinus uncinata*, growing on the vast gravel banks of the Wimbachgries, and the arve on the Reiteralm, spring crocus (*Crocus albiflorus*), dwarf primrose (*Primula minima*), pannonic gentian (*Gentiana pannonica*) and the spotted gentian (*Gentiana punctata*), grow in the many meadows.

Among the rare flowers to be mentioned are also the black vanilla orchid (*Nigritella nigra*), the Alpine aster (*Aster alpinus*) and the edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinus*) that still can often be found.

Diverse plants grow exclusively in the national park and can be found nowhere else in Bavaria: *Aquilegia eeinseleana*, *Lomatogonium carinthiacum*, *Salix alpina*, *Primula clusiana*, *Horminum pyrenaicum* and *Garex fuliginosa*.

The inventory of species is still going on; up to now more than 700 species of ferns and flowering plants have been ascertained. A great number of them are on the "Red List of Endangered Species in Bavaria". Furthermore, we know about 500 different moss species that make about three fifths of the total Bavarian moss stand. The already established species of moss and flowering plants are given in List 1 (available at the Secretariat).

d. Fauna

The exact number of animal species in the national park is not yet established; scientific research will have to deal with this problem. The ascertained and supposed species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, molluscs, shells, beetles, millipedes and spiders are given in List 2 (available at the Secretariat).

It must be pointed out that the Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*) was killed off in the Berchtesgaden region, but was successfully reintroduced in the 1930s. At present about 70 Alpine ibex live here, mainly in the German-Austrian frontier area near the Kleines Teufelshorn.

The Alpine white hare (*Lepus timidus varronis*), hardly to be found in the Alps, can relatively often be seen in the national park. Rarities however are the little Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and the Alpine shrew (*Sorex alpinus*), both on the Bavarian Red List.

The colourful bird world exhibits a series of species which are unknown or quite rare in the other German regions. Numerous species are on Bavaria's Red List. Among the highly endangered species must be mentioned the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), the white-backed woodpecker (*Denrocopas leucotus*), the meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), the black grouse (*Lyrurus tetrix*), the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*), and the hazel hen (*Tetrastes bonasea*). Among the butterflies must be pointed out the red Apollo (*Parnassius apollo*).

e. Research

The almost virgin landscape of the national park is particularly suitable for research work in the field of establishing connections between natural occurrences. As might be seen from the list of publications (available at the Secretariat), the national park was the subject of scientific research long before its foundation. After the creation of the national park, scientific research was one of the duties of the park's management. A priority aim is the research of the ecosystems. To solve this task a general interdisciplinary concept is necessary. Anticipating it, several projects were initiated. Some of them have already been completed. They include among other things:

- the limnological research of the Königssee lake
- the national park vegetation
- the geological mapping of the Hagen-Gebirge as part of the national park
- the gravel streams of the Wimbackgries
- the fungus flora of the national park
- the humus forms of the Alpine limestone ground of the national park
- the ingestion of roe deer, red deer and chamois
- the demands of recreation in the national park
- the propagation and development of the amphibian species

- the feeding habits of parts of the fox populations
- man's influence on vegetation in the Alpine zone of the Jenner region
- behavioural research in deer feeding
- inventory of the birds of prey.

f. Recreation

At the beginning of the 19th century, Alexander von Humboldt considered the Berchtesgaden region as one of the most beautiful in the world. The famous scientist was fascinated by the magic of this landscape exceptionally rich in flora and fauna. The national park region became popular with tourists in the second half of the 19th century, soon after the emergence of a common enthusiasm for the Alps. Its landscape acquired world fame. When the national park idea was born in the USA in the 1860s and the Yellowstone Park established as the first national park in the world, the writer Heinrich Noe compared it with the German Alps and remarked in 1865: "The Berchtesgadener Land is the Yellowstone Park of the German Alps".

The forefield of the national park with the town of Berchtesgaden developed into one of the major Alpine tourist centres. The increasing impact of tourism on the national park makes it necessary to provide recreation facilities; on the other hand damage to nature by public access has to be prevented.

In the execution of this task, leisure and recreation facilities are provided only for hikers and skiers, who exclusively move on foot in the national park, except for the passenger shipping traffic on the Königssee lake. Cable railways and ski lifts do not exist and will not be admitted.

For many decades the major part of the protected area has a network of Alpine footpaths and trails, which were laid out by the State Forest Administration to facilitate hunting and forestry, by Alpine dairy farmers for driving their cattle, and by the Alpine clubs for hiking and mountain climbing. Other footpaths and trails will not be constructed. Only a restricted coarse-meshed network of paths is maintained for walking and climbing in order to secure zones of silence against the mass of tourists. Several mountain refuges, open to the general public, are used as bases for alpinists.

The ever-growing number of tourists in the Berchtesgaden region gives the chance to impart to the wide public an interest in the significance and value of the national park and in nature conservation matters. For this purpose, an information office has been set up at the edge of the national park, just beyond its boundaries. Other enquiry offices will follow near the main entries to the national park. Brochures, lectures, discourses and excursions provide the public with ecological knowledge and appreciation of nature protection.

g. Cultural value

The Berchtesgadener Land looks back on 700 years of cultural history. At the beginning of the 12th century monks of the Augustinian Canons settled down in this area. They founded a convent which, in the course of the following century, was put under the authority of the Empire with a prince-abbot as sovereign. The Berchtesgadener Land being so small, a writer joked about it, saying the "Berchtesgaden is almost as high as it is long".

The prince-abbots erected the St. Bartholomä pilgrimage church at the foot of the Watzmann east flank, in the present national park area. Since the end of the Middle Ages, every year on the feast day of St. Bartholomä, the population of the Austrian Pinzgau region makes a pilgrimage to this church, taking the path over the Steinerne Meer massif.

When Alpine dairy farming was at its peak - in the late Middle Ages and at the beginning of the 17th century - the farmers from the Berchtesgadener Land made use of every spot that seemed to be suited to serve as a pasture.

Despite the decline of Alpine dairy farming, 219 Alpine dairy Alp huts still existed in the area of the national park in the middle of the 19th century. In 1974 23 huts were still being used for farming. The huts are relics of a bygone age. The national park management is endeavouring to preserve the huts of historical value. An ensemble of Alpine dairy huts was created at the Bindalm in the Klausback valley, illustrating the development of these huts in the Berchtesgaden region.

3. European interest justifying the application

European interest in the maintenance, special protection and particular care of the Berchtesgaden National Park appears to be well established by the facts.

These facts are:

- the abundance of natural or nearly natural populations, concentrated on a territory of 21,000 hectares;
- the specific geological and morphological Triassic formations, rich in fossils of extraordinary diversity;
- the abundance of biotopes, worth being protected, and the very great number of species of plants and animals which are rare and threatened with extinction;
- the scientific significance and value of the natural populations of this extensive area, which are an excellent subject for studies and research;
- the fascination of the unique beauty of the landscape, attracting all those seeking rest and relaxation, bringing man closer to nature and stimulating the interest of wide sections of the population in nature conservation matters;
- the cultural and historical significance of the region demonstrated by the centuries-old pilgrimages to St. Bartholomä and the few existing Alpine dairy huts, a testimony of times long past.

A P P E N D I X

EXTRACT FROM THE STATE DECREE CONCERNING THE ALBENPARK AND
THE BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK OF 18 JULY 1978

§ 6

Aims

1. The national park's aims are:
 1. to protect the landscape and to conserve nature,
 2. to conserve the natural and the nearly natural populations as well as the greatest possible number of the numerous species of animals and plants;

to observe and to study those species scientifically and, as far as the preservation of the right of property and of the protective functions allow, to forward their natural development;
 3. to open the area to the public for recreation and information as far as the aims of protection allow.
2. Economic use is not intended in the national park.

§ 7

Scientific studies and research

1. In addition to the Nationalparkverwaltung, acknowledged research institutes and individual scientists can conduct scientific observations, studies and research programmes without interfering with the rights of a third person. The research programmes work may reach beyond the limits of the national park.
2. The Nationalparkverwaltung must be informed about the beginning and results of research programmes.
3. Research programmes and individual scientific studies must be supported in an appropriate way.

§ 8

Information and recreation

The public must be informed of the aim of the national park (§ 6), its ecological conditions and its recreational possibilities. This can be done by means of illustrative material and information on projects and works, including research and studies in the national park.

Appendix

§ 9

Prohibitions

1. Within the national park it is prohibited to ruin and damage nature or to make any changes, in particular:
 1. destruction of ground elements, causing excavations or explosions or changing the nature of the ground in any other manner;
 2. altering the shores of the lakes, the natural water courses and bodies of water, their banks, the level of the ground water, the inflow or outflow of the water, as well as the drawing off of water in greater quantities than allowed by the water right;
 3. to disturb or to change biotopes for plants or animals;
 4. to introduce plants and to release animals;
 5. to use pesticides or other chemicals.
2. In order to protect plants and animals, it is forbidden:
 1. to remove or damage plants as well as to pull out, dig out or to take along roots, tubers or bulbs;
 2. to pursue wild living animals, to disturb them deliberately, to lay contrivances for the capture of them, to capture or to kill them, or to remove or damage nests, other breeding places or clutches of eggs of these animals.
3. Further, it is forbidden to initiate measures for buildings, provisions of services as well as any changes in the use, as follows:
 1. to construct, to modify, to abolish buildings as defined in the Bayer. Bauordnung, even when a planning permission is not required; this applies in particular to the setting up of kiosks and stands;
 2. to use buildings for other purposes than those stated in § 10, par. 1-4, in particular to rent such buildings;
 3. to use public refuges for other purposes;
 4. to construct mountain track and cable railways, including towing lifts;
 6. to erect wire lines;
4. The following activities are furthermore forbidden:
 1. to operate boats, vehicles or other amphibian bodies on the water, or to undertake organised diving training;
 2. to drive or to park motor vehicles of all types as defined in § 1, par. 2 of the Strassenverkehrsgesetz, all types of caravans as well as to ride on horseback or in horse-drawn vehicles except on the roads provided for this kind of traffic;

Appendix

3. to use other motor-driven vehicles;
4. to camp, to light a fire and to spend the night outdoors;
5. to bathe in the rivers and the lakes;
6. to put up pictorial and lettered signs or path markings without the permission of the Unteren Naturschutzbehörde;
7. to practice any economic use for other purposes than permitted by § 10, paras 1-4 without the permission of the Unteren Naturschutzbehörde;
8. to shoot, to make a noise, to use sound-transmitting or sound-reproducing appliances outdoors;
9. to pollute the grounds or water;
10. to let dogs run without a lead, with the exception of hut watchdogs and hunting dogs when in action under § 10, para. 4;
11. to treat animals living wild with active substances for other purposes than for the control of epidemics.

§ 10

Agriculture and forestry

Culling and fishing

1. The legal exercise of forest rights, in particular of the clearing pasture and forest pasture right, remains unaffected. The forest pasture rights have to be adjusted as soon as possible in co-operation with the Nationalparkverwaltung.

Pastures can be rented only with the permission of the Unteren Naturschutzbehörde.

2. Mineral fertilisers and herbicides can only be used for the purposes of a careful use of the Alpine clear pastures and this only as far as populations and species situated outside those areas are not impaired.

3. Forest tending measures must be carried out in conformity with the aims as stated in § 6. Individual measures have to be included in the National Park Plan (§ 13).

4. The Nationalparkverwaltung is regulating the game population on the basis of wildlife biological studies in accordance with the national park's aim (§ 6) and as provided in the regional landscape plan (§ 2) and in the National Park Plan (§ 13).

Measures for culling can be undertaken only according to the regulations of the Bundesjagdgesetz, the Bayer. Jagdgesetz and the decrees issued to execute these laws. On the proposal of the Nationalparkverwaltung, the competent authorities can allow exceptions to the provisions of the hunting right when the achievement of the national park aim (§ 6) makes this necessary. For culling, the Nationalparkverwaltung must use the services of the respective forest authority.

Appendix

5. The Nationalparkverwaltung controls and regulates the fish stock on the basis of biological studies, in conformity with the aim of the national park (§ 6) and under the provisions of the regional landscape plan (§ 2) and the National Park Plan (§ 13). Professional fishery in the Königsee is allowed on the present scale provided that it is done in conformity with the regional landscape plan (§ 2) and the National Park Plan (§ 13).

6. All measures as provided in paras. 1-5 must be carried out in accordance with the principles of landscape conservation.

7. The architecture of the permissible building projects must fit into the landscape and consider the local character.

§ 11

Exceptions

1. The following activities remain unaffected:

1. measures for the protection of the population and measures to ward off dangers threatening life and body of men and important goods;
2. measures taken by the Nationalparkverwaltung in accordance with § 6;
3. the introduction of animal species on the basis of game biological studies, with the exception of predatory animals which may endanger man;
4. the electroboat traffic of the Königsee by the Staatliche Verwaltung Schifffahrt Königsee;
5. the operation of electroboats by the state administrations in cases of urgent official trips, and the operation of one boat each for the professional fishermen, for the management of the Fischunkel and Salletalm, and for the provisioning of the St. Bartholamä and Salletalm restaurants;
6. the operation and rental of 50 rowboats at most by the Staatliche Verwaltung Schifffahrt Königsee;
7. motor car drives by the state administrations in case of urgent official trips and for legally authorised measures under §§ 10 and 11;
8. the operation of electrically driven wheel chairs on roads and paths closed to vehicles;
9. in contact with the Nationalparkverwaltung the digging out of masterwort and gentian roots for the distilleries, their distillation in previous dimensions and in the usual method without impairment of scientific studies (§ 7) which however should not be carried through without hearing the parties entitled;
10. the bivouacking which cannot be avoided when undertaking extensive mountain tours;

11. notwithstanding § 10, the commercial activity exercised in the national park region at the effective date of the Decree, in previous dimensions and provided that it does not contradict the aim of the national park (§ 6, para. 1).
2. Further unaffected remain the specially authorised permissible measures existing at the effective date of the Decree.
3. § 68, para. 2, No. 3 of the Bundesleistungsgesetz remains unaffected; the Bayer. Staatsministerium für Landesentwicklung and Umweltfragen is competent for giving the agreement of the party entitled.