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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

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**REPORT**

**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE  
TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK**

**(SLOVENIA)**

5-6 September 2018

*Document prepared  
by Mr Pierre Galland (Switzerland)*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Diploma for Protected Areas was awarded to the Triglav National Park in 2004. An on-the-spot appraisal was undertaken in 2008 and subsequently the Diploma was renewed in 2009, for a ten years period. 10 recommendations were attached to the renewal decision [CM/ResDip\(2009\)8](#) of 21 October 2009.

I visited the Park on 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The visit was very well organised by the Park's staff and I warmly thank all those who participated in the mission and the discussions. They all showed a deep commitment in favour of their area and they very thoroughly answered to all the questions during the field and indoor discussions. The mission actually was very short in regards to the size and geographical complexity of the area; however due to my previous knowledge of the park I could have a very comprehensive overview of the situation and the current challenges.

I met also representatives of local authorities and from the tourism sector. In addition, I met 2 of the former Park directors, Mrs Marija Zupančič-Vičar and Mr Peter Skoberne. They also all contributed greatly to my understanding of the history of the park and of the current situation.

## 2. SITUATION AND VALUE OF THE PARK

The Triglav National Park covers almost the entire Slovenian part of the Julian Alps in the north-west part of Slovenia, about 60 km north-west of Ljubljana, near the border between Slovenia, Italy and Austria. It was established in 1981 and though the legal situation has significantly changed since then, the actual Park borders have not been modified. It must be noted that the Park is now completely included in the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve and that efforts have been made to closely collaborate with adjacent Italian protected areas.

The Triglav Lakes Valley, in the heart of the present park, was protected in 1924 and became a national park in 1961 over a larger area. In 1981 the Triglav National Park was established with its present size of 83 807 ha, representing about 4% of Slovenia. With the Triglav National Park Act adopted in 2010 the overall size of protected area increased by additional 175 ha. The Park's highest point is Mount Triglav culminating at 2 864 m and the lowest point is the Tolminka river at 180 m.

The park is named according to Mt Triglav, symbol of Slovenia, which is situated almost in the centre of the protected territory. From it the valleys spread out, supplying water to two large river systems which have their sources in the Julian Alps: the Soča river, flowing to the Adriatic and the Sava river, flowing to the Black Sea.

The Park is on limestone and presents practically all the karst and glacial phenomena, with high summits, steep slopes, deep valleys, high plateaux, caves and pits, underground water. With the exception of Lake Bled, close to the Park, all glacial lakes of Slovenia are located in the Park.

The very high morphological diversity is reflected in the diversity of vegetation, flora and fauna. The alpine elements dominate, but with Mediterranean influences.

Despite the high pressure from tourism and sport activities, the state of conservation appears to be very good, with some concerns regarding the future (see chapters below).

Detailed information on the park can be found on the website <https://www.tnp.si>

## 3. LEGAL BASIS

### Triglav National Park history milestones:

- 1908 – first proposal by Prof. Albin Belar; unfortunately, the idea was not realised
- 1924 – The Alpine Conservation Park in the Triglav Lakes Valley was founded (1600 ha)
- 1961 – The decree promulgating the Triglav Lakes Valley as the Triglav National Park (2000 ha)
- 1981 – the Law on the Triglav National Park defined the park's current borders
- 2010 – Adoption of the new Triglav National Park Act

The Park was established by the Triglav National Park Act in 1981. Until 2010, the legal basis was not adapted to the Slovenian Nature Conservation Act of 1999. The new Triglav National Park Act

was finally adopted in 2010 and opened the door for the preparation of an integrated Management Plan. *“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”*. (Triglav National Park annual report 2016)

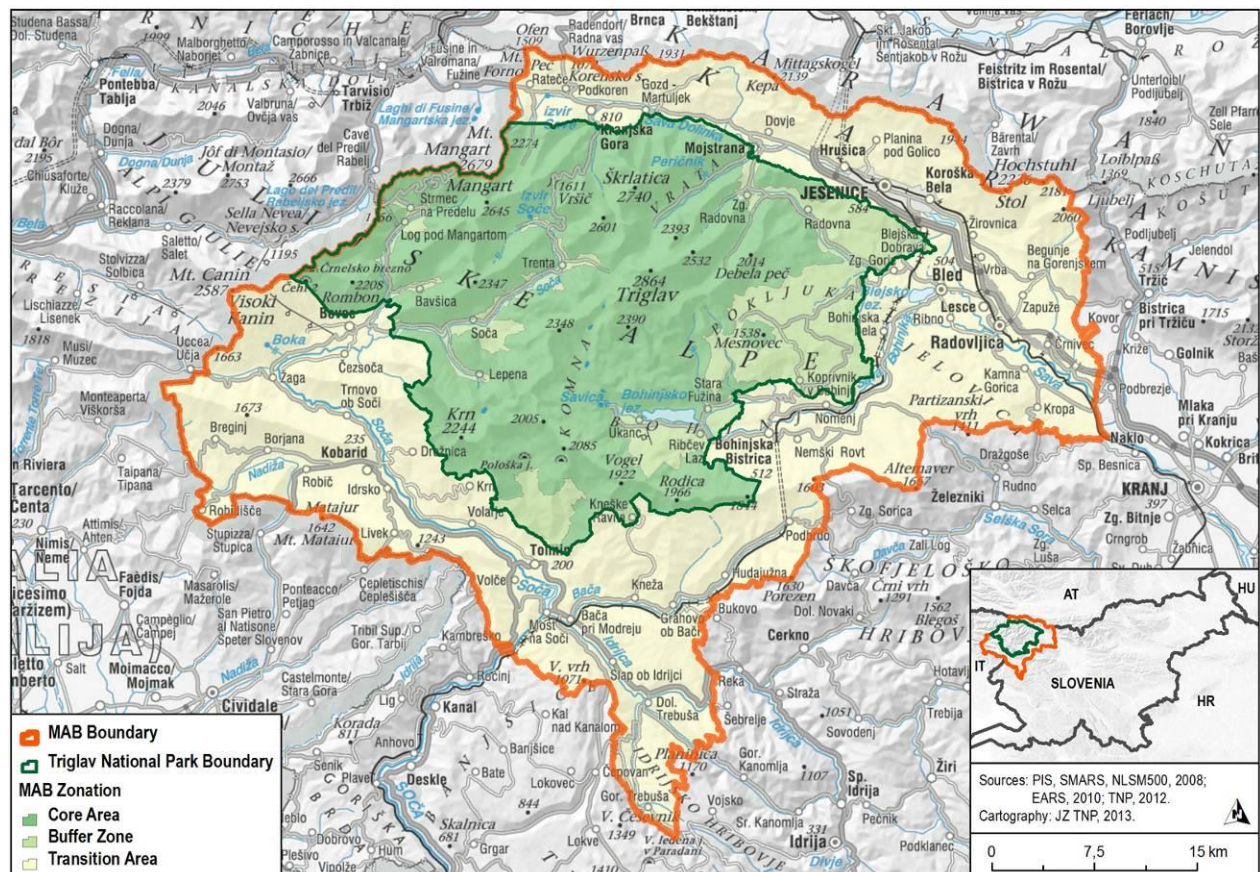
In 2017, an Act Amending Triglav National Park Act was adopted. *“It brings the following changes: building of water reservoirs in existing recreation centres is permissible, a legal possibility for park municipalities to plan smaller spatial arrangements in those areas where spatial plan act should be drawn up is established, design and construction of roads in special protected areas such as natural monuments and natural reserves, where the use of roads is not possible due to natural disasters is allowed, gives the possibility to legalise existing incompatible construction of water reservoir at ski centre Triglav on Pokljuka and rehabilitate it properly”* (Triglav National Park annual report 2017)

After several years of preparation, the Management Plan was adopted in 2016, with a validity of 10 years. Though no English translation is available yet, the Plan appears to be very satisfactory for most of the concerned partners. Triglav National Park annual programmes since 2016 have been prepared according to the Management Plan.

In parallel a global tourism strategy (Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve Sustainable Tourism Development Plan) had been prepared for the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve, which included the Park and the surrounding communities.

**International status and cooperation**

- National park IUCN category II (national park) and Category V (protected landscape)
- Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO) since 2003
- Natura 2000 since 2004
- Member of Europarc Federation (since 1986) and ALPARC Network (since 1995), international cooperation with Hochtannus Natural Park (Germany), Snowdonia National Park (Wales), Hohe Tauern (Austria), Les Ecrins (France) and Crater Lake National Park (USA)
- European Diploma for Protected Areas (2004, renewed in 2009)
- Federation Europarc's Certificate of Excellence for Transboundary Cooperation with Prealpi Giulie Natural Park (2009), Certificate for Ecological Transboundary Pilot region for Ecological Connectivity (2014) and Certificate for Sustainable Tourism (European Charter For Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas) (2016) with Prealpi Giulie Natural Park
- European Union Prize for cultural heritage / Europa Nostra awards for the safeguarding of a rare and authentic example of 18th century alpine architectural and ethnological heritage on Pocar Farm in Zgornja Radovna (2007)



The Triglav National Park is included in the Biosphere Reserve of the Julian Alps, designated in 2003 and covering the whole territory of the municipalities concerned, with a total area of 195'723 ha (ca. 11% of Slovenia).

#### 4. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Park is managed by the Public Institution Triglav National Park, which depends on the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning.

The Park Council, nominated by the government, has 20 members and meets 4 times / year. It is composed of:

- 4 representatives from different ministries (environment, culture, development, agriculture/forestry);
- 9 representatives from the local communities
- 1 representative of the Park's administration
- 2 representatives from the land owners
- 1 representative from NGOs
- 1 representative from the Alpine Association of Slovenia
- 1 representative from the Hunting Association of Slovenia
- 1 representative from the scientific community.

An advisory Expert Council of 7 members is appointed by the Park Council. It usually meets 4 times / year.

The Park has 55 employees, including 19 rangers. The Park administration is located in a modern, large building in Bled, with good facilities for offices, exhibits and conferences. Like the other information centres, it is run jointly by the park and the tourism associations. (Center Bohinj shares the info desk 70:30%, Infocenter Bled 50:50%, Information Centre Dom Trenta shares maintenance of Soča River Trail.

The current annual budget is € 2.25 million. Ca. 75 % is provided by the relevant Ministry, the remaining amount is provided by the commercial activities of the Park, such as accommodation for

visitors and sales. Special programmes and projects receive support from other ministries or international sources.

This budget is more or less stable, with a slight increase foreseen for the coming years. However, it is not sufficient to fully implement the measures included in the recently adopted Management Plan.

## **5. MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

The vision of the Triglav National Park (Triglav National Park official website):

*As a unique area of protected nature in the Alps, the Triglav National Park's priority objectives are conservation of ecosystems and natural processes, natural assets, diversity of habitats, plant and animal species, landscape quality and landscape diversity.*

*In the settled parts of the national park, the primary focus is to safeguard the cultural heritage and landscape quality, which is the result of long-term harmony between nature and man. With the support of competent government bodies, the inhabitants of the Park are ensured suitable economic and social conditions that promote sustainable development of activities that enable and encourage maintenance of populations and high-quality living and working environment, typical identity and traditional use of natural resources.*

*Conservation of natural and cultural heritage, sustainable development and communication with the general public are the challenges and tasks of the Triglav National Park, which assists the inhabitants and visitors to the Park through active cooperation, helping them become fully aware of the role and importance of protecting nature, cultural heritage and sustainable development in the Alps.*

*The national park is a model example of successful harmonisation of different interests focused on a common goal: well-preserved nature, landscape and cultural heritage. The values of a national park are a motive and an attractive goal for visitors who respect the exceptional nature and cultural heritage as well as the peace and quiet of the area. Through various forms of sustainable mobility and suitable park infrastructure visitors are directed towards less vulnerable parts of the national park where they are offered a wealth of opportunities for nature experience and relaxation.*

### **5.1 Land Ownership**

Originally, most of the land was state-owned. Following the “denationalisation” (privatisation) process, only a very small proportion of the land is still owned by the National Park. It is estimated that currently 22% is state-owned and 24 % belongs to the Municipalities. The transfer of land to former owners is still underway. At the end of the process, about 10 % of the land should be state land or owned by municipalities. The rest will be owned by private people, agricultural associations and the Roman Catholic Church (Archbishopric of Ljubljana and Archbishopric of Novo mesto), a very important (major) owner on the Pokljuka and Mežakla plateaus. The Triglav National Park does not have an active role in the denationalisation process but collaborates closely with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the State Attorney’s Office.

According to the Triglav National Park Act, the Triglav National Park Public Institution has a public authorisation to exercise pre-emption right on agricultural land, forest land, water areas and urban or built-up land in the name of the state of Slovenia. In 2017, the pre-emption right was exercised on 6,19 ha of land. It is important that as much land as possible could be managed by the Park, which should also actively buy land of interest for nature. Specific funds for purchase of land are at the disposal of the Park but it is sometimes difficult to reach agreements with private owners.

Management of the state-owned land in the park belongs to the Fund for Agricultural Land and Forests of the Republic of Slovenia. In 2016, the Slovenian Forests as a state-owned company was established in order to manage state-owned forests. However, a minor part of state-owned land is also directly managed by the Triglav National Park.

### **5.2 Zoning and Land use planning**

#### Zoning

The Triglav National Park Act defines three protection zones, the 1st and 2nd are central zones, the 3rd 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 the 2nd zone to 3rd or 1st zone with the condition that the central part

does not decrease. The main opportunity is to transform the zonation towards 1st zone (wilderness) and keep the 3rd zone for sustainable use.

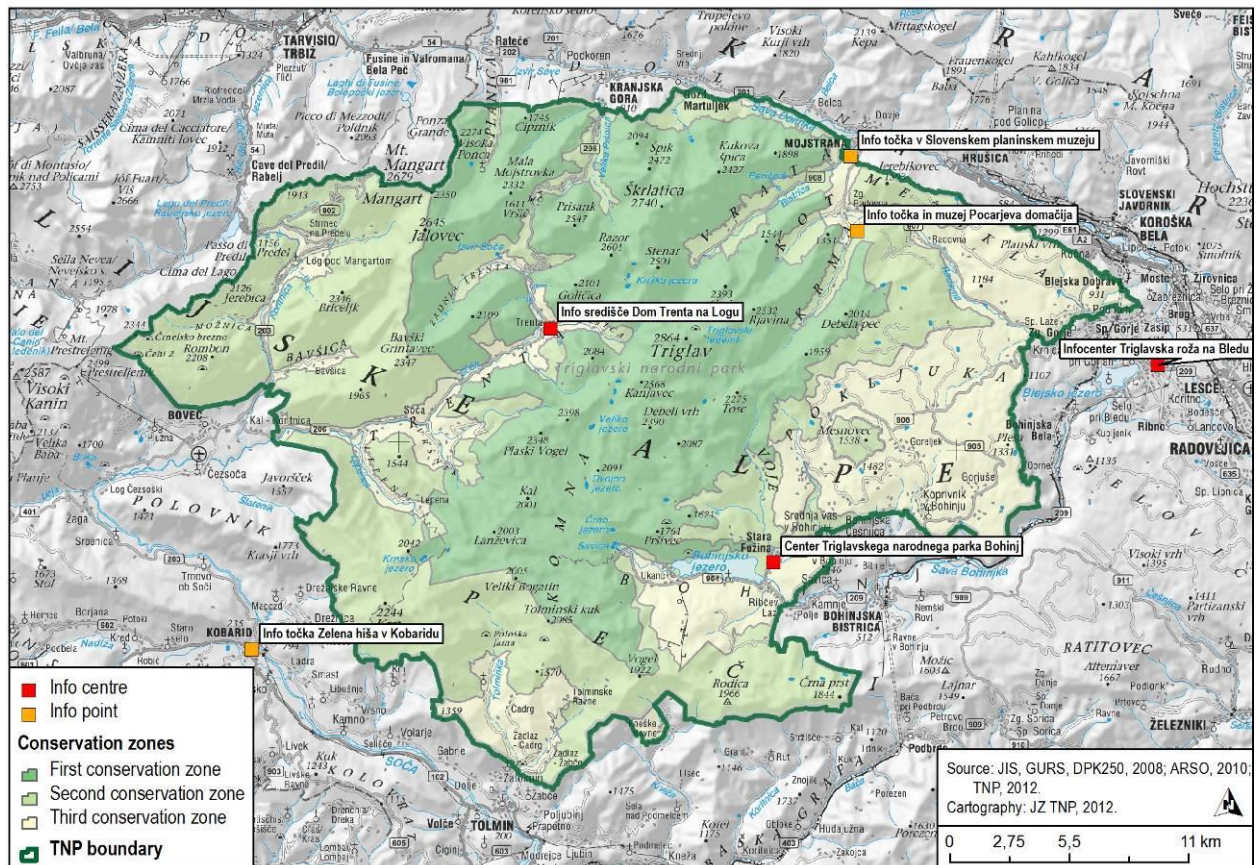
It will include 3 protection zones:

1<sup>st</sup> zone: Strict protection (“wilderness”) – no hunting / wildlife regulation.

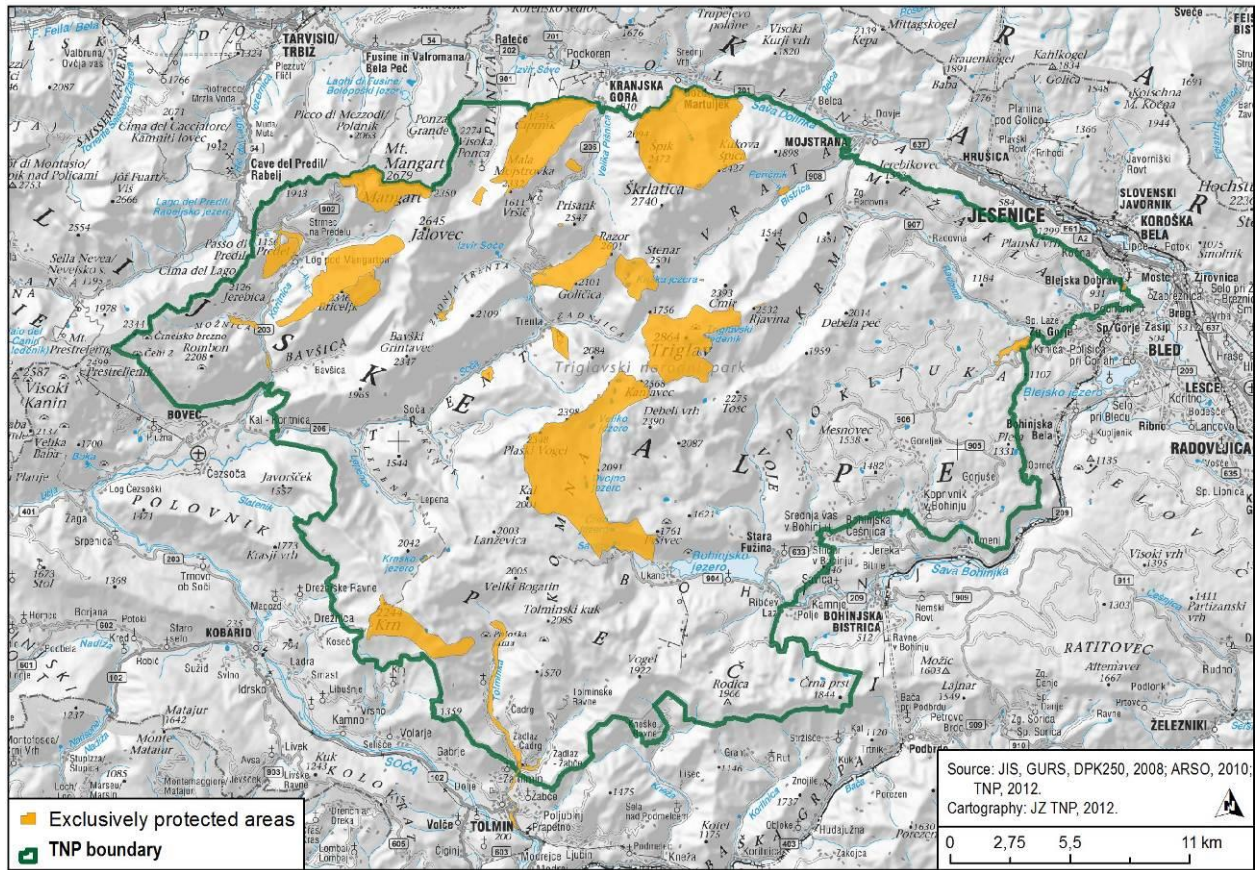
2<sup>nd</sup> zone: Protection zone, where traditional uses (agriculture, forestry, hunting) are allowed

3<sup>rd</sup> zone: Sustainable use zone, including permanent settlements and villages

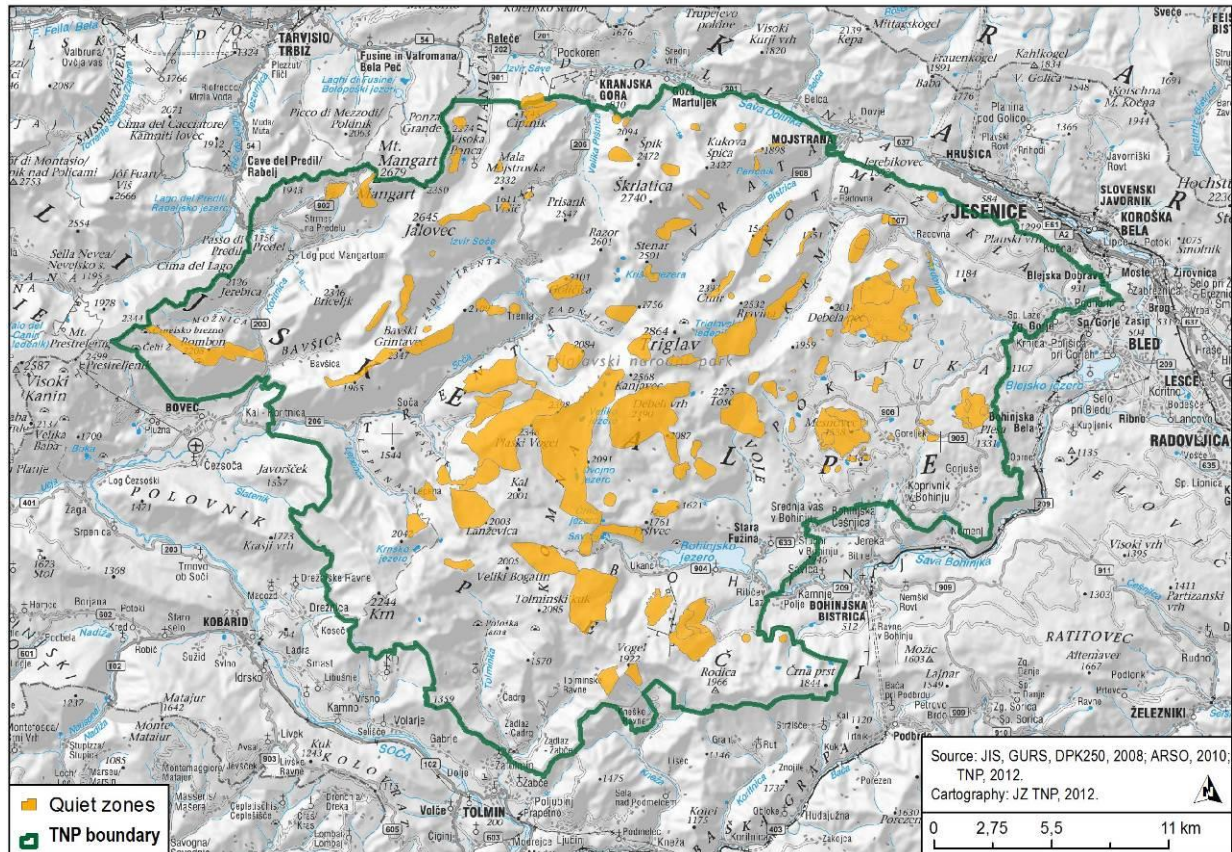
The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> zones constitute the core zone of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve. The 3<sup>rd</sup> zone is the buffer zone, and there is a large transition zone outside the protected area covering the surrounding municipalities.



Almost the whole territory of the Park is covered by the Bird Directive (91 %) and three sites are designated as Natura 2000 sites under the Habitat Directive: Julian Alps, bogs of Pokljuka Plateau, Radovna. The Triglav National Park Public Institution is responsible for their management and for implementing the conservation measures defined by the Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015-2020).



In addition a network of “quiet zones”, covering an area of 8.800 ha has been established, where public access will be strictly controlled, namely in favour of wildlife conservation. This is a dynamic instrument which will be adapted to the results from scientific monitoring and improved knowledge about wildlife distribution and population dynamic.



### Land use planning

Constructions are not allowed in the core zone of the Park, with the exception of some areas where buildings linked to agriculture can be renovated, built or rebuilt. However, everywhere in the Park, pressure is very high for new construction, renovation and changes of destination.

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 preparation. In the process of drafting a municipal spatial development plan and a municipal spatial order, the Triglav National Park Public Institute takes an active part, in accordance with the Nature Conservation Act and the new law on Triglav National Park, in preparation of nature conservation guidelines.

For the constructions authorised, the Park takes an active role, with other partners, to encourage the best possible integration of the local style when houses or farms are built or renovated. In general renovations that take place inside the Park are well integrated in the landscape.

Every year, the Park has to deal with more than 200 applications related to spatial planning. There is a good cooperation with the municipal authorities in charge of delivering construction permits,

### **5.3 Fauna**

The typical alpine species are present, like chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*), alpine marmot (*Marmota marmota*) and alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*). The alpine marmot and alpine ibex were reintroduced. At lower elevation, the population of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) continues to increase and is subject to controlled hunting. Hunting is allowed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> protection zones, but strict quotas are determined every year for specific hunting area. Slovenia Forest Service is an authorised hunting planning authority in Slovenia and the park management is working closely with it to produce best possible long-term and short-term hunting plans.

There is a very rich and diverse bird fauna in the Park, with 115 breeding species. Some managerial choices have to be made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> protection zones in order to maintain or



reinforce the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) population. In order to improve the quality of species habitat some forest interventions are needed for this purpose.

The Soča trout, *Salmo marmoratus*, is present in the upper Soča Valley, where it still exists as a pure population, with no hybridisation with the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*). Research is underway, in cooperation with Crater Lake National Park (Oregon, USA). The presence of alien fish species in rivers and other water bodies within Triglav National Park is due to their introductions taking place in the 20th century. From the management perspective, at least two topics present the park's management priorities for the near future: a need to reduce a population of a rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in streams and rivers and as a second priority, to carry out complete eradication of deliberately introduced fish into the glacier (mountain) lakes, such as Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) and Eurasian minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*).

Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), wolf (*Canis lupus*) and lynx (*Lynx lynx*) are regularly observed, but in small numbers. There is a relatively large bear population in Slovenia (600 – 800 animals), but mostly in the southern part of the country. A northward extension of the population is expected; the situation is similar for the wolf and efforts to reinforce the lynx population are underway.

*“In 2013, the Triglav National Park 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 stakeholder’s requests for applying the radical measures with taking animals from the wild. In 2014, the Triglav National Park officially entered a five-year project LIFE+ WolfAlps (LIFE12 NAT/IT/000807) with a focus on wolf conservation 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 Triglav National Park 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. It was expected that the implementation of such measures will continue. However, according to the results of comprehensive winter monitoring (snow tracking) within the Triglav National Park during the winter time 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, no wolf presence was confirmed therefore no mitigation measures were needed with that regard. Furthermore, several educational and awareness raising activities (e.g. guided school visits, exhibitions, etc) took place in the last three years 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 participated in a project ForAdapt run by the Department Forest- and Soil Sciences (DFS) at the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU) in Vienna. The collaboration was aimed to establish grounds for adaptive cross border brown bear management within the study area. As a Transboundary pilot region for ecological connectivity of the Alpine Convention, we also participate in a project AlpBioNet2030 (Alpine Space Programme) led by the ALPARC. The project is also focusing on an issue of human - nature coexistence, including with regard to large carnivores.”* (Triglav National Park annual report 2017)

#### **5.4 Vegetation and flora**

Beech forest with *Anemone trifolia* is dominant, with spruce and larch at higher altitudes. Spruce is abundant; it has been actively encouraged in some exploited forests on the Pokljuka plateau. Fire is rare. Mountain pine (*Pinus mugo*) covers wide areas around the timber limit, associated with *Rhodotamnus* and *Rhododendron*. Thermophile associations include the *Orno-Ostryetum*, the endemic *Cytisantho-ostryetum* and the *Pinetum austroalpinum*.

Grassland is essentially of the *Seslerio-sempervirentetum* type

Linked with the diversity of natural conditions, many other vegetation types are known.

The flora is very rich, with about 1 600 vascular plants, some rare and some endemic such as *Aconitum angustifolium*, *Campanula zoysii*, *Cerastium subtriflorum*, *Festuca laxa*, *Papaver ernestimayeri*, *Papaver victoris*.

The interesting peat-bog formations have recently been the subject of a large Life Project with the aim to ensure better knowledge, protection and revitalisation of these very sensitive zones. Access to some of them has been prohibited (quiet zones), while other have been equipped with interpretive trail and explanatory signs.

### **5.5 Forests management**

The forests in the core area are left to their natural evolution, without intervention. This applies also to many areas in the other zones, which have very limited access.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> zones, there is a regular exploitation of the productive forests, under the control of the State Forestry Service and in co-ordination with the Park administration. Natural regeneration is the main rule, with limited planting. Exploitation is in general extensive, with no clear cuts and large areas untouched because of lack of good timber or lack of access.

*“In general, the forests in the Triglav National Park 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 recognised as an exemption only in order to improve the naturalness of altered forest stands or to increase their stability and resistance. The Triglav National Park together with the Slovenian Institute for Nature Conservation are taking part in a process of forestry management plans preparation. Also, the Triglav National Park 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 recognised 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. However, the expectations of increasing attacks of bark beetles within the protected area came true in 2016 and 2017. Due to bark beetle’s infestation intensive interventions are required in order to limit further spread of insects to healthy coniferous stands. It is expected that the abovementioned pressure on coniferous forests will continue also in 2018”.* (Triglav National Park annual report 2017).

After the 2014 disaster, the State took special measures which were unfortunately not differentiated regarding the protection status of the forest areas (national parks, etc.) and the degree of damage. In the future, such measures should be adapted to the level of damage and the conservation status.

### **5.6 Agriculture**

Part of the landscape of Triglav National Park has been shaped by centuries of human activity. Mountain agriculture is still widespread in part of the Park, generally in a very extensive form. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> zone, it is mostly seasonal grazing with some cheese production. The interest for mountain pasture has started to increase probably following the development of local market and branding of the products. The Park is developing a very active programme to promote organic farming, local products and rural tourism. Local breeds of sheep and goats are also encouraged.

*“In 2017 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. 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 a strategy of development of high-altitude pastures in Bohinj was prepared last year. The strategy is now ready to enter the discussion and get the approval of the Bohinj Municipal Council”.* (Triglav National Park annual report 2017)

In the lower part of the Park, mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> zone, clear signs of intensification can be seen, fortunately still localised. Round bales are now common along the fields, while empty traditional hay racks are the majority. This might be an important cultural loss as well as having a consequence on meadows biodiversity.

## **5.7 Waste water**

The water quality is regularly monitored in the Park as in other part of the country by the state institution in charge. According to the Management Plan the Triglav National Park Public Institution is establishing additional regular monitoring of water quality on selected springs and high mountain lakes. In general, the water quality is good, thanks to the efforts made to collect and treat the waste waters. However, the development of tourism and in particular the tourism infrastructures, already has and may have an impact on the water quality also in the future. The global warming may also have an influence on the water quality of the lakes and hydrological conditions of streams and rivers; temperature rise has a direct influence on the fish reproduction.

*Water treatment in the alpine huts: “There are 36 mountain huts in the Triglav National Park and at the end of the year 2017, 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 mountain huts owned and managed by Triglav National Park have wastewater treatment plants.”* (Triglav National Park annual report 2017)

## **5.8 Cultural heritage**

Human occupation and use of the territory is very ancient and has made important marks on the landscapes, such as high pastures and cowsheds, typical hayracks, characteristic architecture of villages. The west part of the National Park shows clear Mediterranean influences, with stone constructions predominant, the east part is influenced by Central European, as reflected in the wood constructions. Mining, which declined at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has left many tracks.

Mountaineering has a very long and active history in the Triglav region, as is well explained in the Alpine Museum in Mojstrana. The Triglav part of the Iron Route was opened in 2007.

The Park is doing every effort to ensure that new building and renovation of old buildings respect the traditional architecture. There are many good examples of success, but also some buildings with no efforts of integration.

*“The Triglav National Park Authority is running expert groundwork and an inventory and evaluation of the existing building stock (including alpine pastures) in order to define the typology and provide potential solutions in construction works. The project is interdisciplinary (in cooperation with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, expert services of relevant municipalities and local experts in the field of spatial planning and architecture) and subject to available funds. In 2017, we prepared valorisation of the building typology for three villages in the Upper Bohinj Valley. Expert basis contents also guidelines and recommendations for placement and architectural design.”* (TNP annual report 2017)

Triglav National Park Public Institution is also involved in the consultative and licensing process for all building cases in the national park – see above

## **6. TOURISM, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Tourism**

Tourism development is clearly the major challenge in Triglav National Park. The number of tourists has significantly grown during the last decade, and this trend is going on. The Julian Alps MAB has had 1.880.047 tourist overnights in year 2014. It is difficult to obtain figures about the visitation of the park itself due to the geography with multiple entry points and the existence of transit roads, but several counting points and records from huts and local accommodations give very clear indications of rapid growth. In the year 2018 systematic network of automatic counters has been set to monitor visitation of the park. There are also a few distinct natural areas with entry tickets. The 23 out of 37 mountain huts have recorded 52.476 overnights from 1.6 - 30.9.2016. It is estimated that 1.5 million people visit the Park every year. On the Bohinj – Seven Lakes trail peaks of 391 people / day have been registered. In the Vrata valley (one of the most visited valleys) the peak of 1.139 people / day has been registered.

In general people observe the park regulations. There are some problems with wild camping and hiking in not designated places. International tourism and mountaineering have a very long and active history in the Triglav region. The Triglav National Park is now included in different hiking routes, and climbing of Triglav, highest point of the country, remains a “to do” thing.

There has been a rapid increase of tourist beds in Bled and Bohinj areas, principally. In Bohinj – Stara Fužina, 80 % of the accommodation is located inside the Park.

One of the main problems is the traffic increase in villages and on the park accesses. Several measures have been successfully implemented, like large parking areas outside of the park or in the 3<sup>rd</sup> zone, with shuttle services bringing visitors into the Park. “Hop on hop off” bus continued to operate in 2017 and 18. [https://issuu.com/tnp-publikacije/docs/tnp\\_2017/16?ff=true&e=1275262/49482618](https://issuu.com/tnp-publikacije/docs/tnp_2017/16?ff=true&e=1275262/49482618)

A detailed management plan which highlights problems related to traffic and transportation is part of Triglav National Park Management Plan where transport and environmentally friendly mobility are on-going tasks. Most opportunities to fulfil the tasks are seen in project financing. In 2017 as part of the project Comprehensive Introduction of Environmentally Friendly Mobility in Triglav National Park for the Preservation and Real Experiencing of Nature, a web portal on sustainable mobility was developed. It covers the area of MaB Biosphere Reserve Julian Alps (<https://mobility.julian-alps.eu/en/>)

The platform is also assessable from info points dedicated to the promotion of sustainable mobility which were established in information centres and information points of the Triglav National Park in Bohinj, Kobarid and Bled and from the Triglav National Park web page <https://www.tnp.si/sl/zemljevid/>

### **6.2 Information**

Information on the Park is very well developed, with, notably, a good website, an excellent newsletter, a series of good leaflets, and various presentations. There are 3 information centres which operate jointly with the tourism sector. The Information centre in Trenta, established in 1994, is located in a very beautiful valley where it provides employment and dynamic activities. It receives ca. 30'000 visitors / year. The Headquarters / Information centre in Bled, established in 2007, is perfectly located to reach the resident population, the schools and the numerous tourists (ca. 40'000 / year). A 3<sup>rd</sup> centre was recently opened (2015) in Stara Fužina, with 15'000 visitors / year). They have very good exhibitions on different themes. And have also children programmes.

### **6.3 Traffic**

Traffic tends to decrease in average but the impact and pressure associated with it still stay as one of the biggest environmental issue in the Park. There is an urgent need for a good traffic concept and control measures in order to minimise disturbances, channel visitors, separate pedestrians and vehicles. Good examples exist, such as measures taken by the Park authority to encourage walking

rather than driving in the Vrata Valley, on Pokljuka plateau and in the Trenta Valley, with a very nice footpath along the Soča river. But more efforts are clearly needed.

It should be noted that the Park is not responsible for the maintenance of the roads; this is ensured by the State, by the Slovenia Forest Service or by municipalities. Airplanes overflying the Park continue to be a source of nuisance. The new law will introduce very strict regulations.

Cycling, mountain biking and recreational running are also increasing; recreation time is moving towards very early morning hours and very late evening hours, thus disturbance of wildlife in very sensitive time. It is not only necessary to regulate these activities spatially, but timely as well

Mountaineering at all levels, from hiking to rock climbing, is the most practised activity. There are 35 alpine huts and refuges. Most are frequently used, many throughout the year.

Downhill skiing is practised on a relatively large scale in the region of Vogel, above Lake Bohinj. This ski area lies in buffer zone of the park and has been built up 20 years before the establishment of the Park. There are few very small ski-lifts here and there in the Park, with practically no modification of the ground and little negative influences.

Cross-country skiing is mainly practised on the Pokljuka plateau. On the same Plateau, at Rudno Polje there is also a biathlon stadium, on a military base. Measures are taken in co-operation with the Park to minimise the impacts on the buffer zone, but a project to enlarge the installations would most likely mean a serious aggravation of the impacts on the Park.

#### **6.4 Sporting and recreation activities**

The Park is appreciated by a number of visitors interested in sports. The demand increases and should be monitored to ensure that these activities do not affect the conditions of the Park and to avoid conflicts between different users.

Also important are the various projects or intentions concerning the existing ski facilities of Vogel (downhill skiing), Pokljuka (biathlon) and Planica (ski jumping). The first two are in the Park, the third just outside. While renovation and up-grading could be justified, if strong environmental measures are taken in parallel and impact reduced to the minimum, there should be no extension of these facilities at the expense of the National Park.

*“According to the new law on Triglav National Park 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. Where in the Triglav National Park cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, paragliding and mountain biking is allowed is shown on detailed maps which are part of Triglav National Park Management Plan. In order to reduce the impact of winter sport practitioners on wildlife in the Alps Triglav National Park experts participate in the project WeWild – We respect Alpine wildlife in preparation of joint communication strategy for the protected areas in the Alps”. (Triglav National Park annual report 2017)*

### **7. RESEARCH**

Most work done by the Park's personal is directed to inventories, but also to the development of sophisticated spatial information systems. Basic scientific research is performed by external institutions and outside researchers. Institutions and researchers have to obtain an authorisation and must provide the results to the Park. *According to the Triglav National Park Act, every research institution, scientific organisation or individual researcher must obtain an approval of Triglav National Park to conduct research activities in the Triglav National Park. 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, a database (developed in 2011) of all permitted and reported researches is maintained on a regular basis. There's also an active and fruitful cooperation between the Triglav National Park Public Institution and scientific institutions in several approved projects (e.g. LIFE WolfAlps, LIFE NaturaViva, AlpBioNet2030, Links4Soils, Nat2Care, etc.)”.*

*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. (TNP annual report 2017)*

## **8. COOPERATION WITHIN THE PARK AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTNERS**

Relationships with the municipalities have apparently improved significantly and are in general good. Municipalities seem to be aware of the challenges related to tourism development, including of the risks involved. The process of preparation of the management plan has in some way obliged the different partners to work closely together. In addition, the frequent changes of Park directors have reinforced the internal cooperation between the different sectors which were acting somewhat independently a few years ago.

Cooperation with the agriculture, forest and tourism services is active. There are some difficulties with the administration in charge of the cultural heritage which could be better taken into consideration especially in the field of cultural landscape protection. In general, there is a need expressed at several occasions for more coordination at national level among the different ministries involved in the Park management activities and regulations.

There is close co-operation with the Alpine Association of Slovenia, which ensures the maintenance of the network of trails and operates most of the mountain huts.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Triglav National Park ensures since a very long-time good protection to a wealth of natural, landscape and cultural values. Its European importance is not questioned. The 2 main long pending issues, the revision of the law and the management plan, have been successfully addressed. There is still the issue of ensuring the long-term sufficient financing in order to fully implement the Management Plan.

The Park is still in a stage of dynamic evolution, e.g. “denationalisation” process, and, despite the frequent changes of director, can rely on a very competent team of specialists who have been working for the Park for several years. The park authorities are doing their best to respond to increasing pressures, in collaboration with the Municipalities; however, a stronger support from the other concerned ministries would be advisable.

We therefore recommend renewing the European Diploma for the Triglav National Park

In addition, the following condition and recommendations should be attached to the renewal:

### Condition

National authorities should guarantee the necessary budget in order to fully implement the Triglav National Park Management Plan adopted in 2016 including a comprehensive monitoring scheme, and to ensure the long-term conservation of the natural and cultural values of the Park. Also reinstate the former additional funding mechanism for local development of the Park and Biosphere reserve municipalities, which has been suspended for the last few years.

### Recommendations

1. National coordination  
Strengthen the inter-ministerial coordination regarding the Park management implementation and specific management issues
2. Land ownership

Continue to follow closely the transition of ownership in the Park (denationalisation); pursue the active policy of acquisition of land important for nature protection and other park's activities.

3. Zoning

Pursue the efforts for transforming the 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 ultimate goal being to transform the zonation towards 1st zone (wilderness) and keep the 3rd zone for sustainable use.

4. Land-use planning

Continue the good collaboration with municipal authorities responsible for land-use planning when preparing land use plans and when implementing them. Strictly apply the regulations related to new constructions and renovation works.

5. Waste water

Continue to work on adapted solutions to solve the problem of wastewater, especially for buildings and mountain huts with intensive human occupation.

6. Carnivores

Prepare, together with local communities, favourable conditions for increased populations of large carnivores such as brown bear, wolf and lynx. Further develop schemes to enable the co-existence of sheep and cattle farming with carnivores in the Park.

7. Forests

Pursue all measures aiming at converting artificial spruce forest to climax mixed forests and at increasing the area of protection of forests. Apply appropriate mitigation measures after natural disaster specially adapted to the National Park status.

8. Traffic and tourism development

Implement with relevant partners the tourism strategy and continue developing the practical measures to cope with problems related to traffic and transportation especially on seasonal hot-spot areas.

9. Tourism and Sporting activities

Prevent the extension of existing installations for downhill and cross-country skiing as well as jumping. Renovation and upgrading should be accepted only if nature and landscape protection's interests are duly considered.

Continue to monitor the various sporting activities practised in the National Park, with special attention to new sport development (e.g. e-biking, etc.); ensure that they remain compatible with the conservation objectives.

Further develop the Park or regional branding system for goods and services.

10. Cultural heritage

Encourage the best integration of new buildings and the renovation of old buildings in respecting the traditional local style; ensure support to maintaining traditional agriculture practices and their related infrastructure (hay racks, shepherds and cattle mountain buildings, etc.)

11. Management

Promote capacity building and specialisation among permanent park rangers and hire more seasonal rangers during the peak season. Use more regularly the European Diploma logo on publications and appropriate infrastructure, and in general promote the European Diploma for Protected Areas more actively.

**Appendix I: decision 2009****Draft Resolution  
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas  
awarded to the Triglav National Park,  
(Slovenia)**

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,  
Having regard to Resolution (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 ResDip(2004)11 on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Triglav National Park (Slovenia);

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 Triglav National Park until 5 May 2019;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

- a new law should provide the adequate legal basis for the conservation of the Triglav National Park as soon as possible;
- the management plan should be finalised and formalised as soon as the new law on Triglav National Park is passed;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. ensure that, when the new zoning is in place, any further change of zones should be in favour of increased protection;
2. the land-use planning regulations related to new constructions and renovation work should be strictly applied;
3. work on adapted solutions to solve the problem of wastewater should be continued, especially for buildings and mountain huts with intensive human occupation;
4. schemes to enable the co-existence of sheep and cattle farming and the presence of large carnivores such as bears, wolves and lynx should continue to be developed, to ensure their continuing presence and an increase in their population;
5. the best integration possible of the various activities conducted in the park should be ensured, for example the integration of farming and nature protection;
6. all measures aiming at converting artificial spruce forest to climax mixed forests and at increasing the area of protection forests should be pursued;
7. a detailed management plan and practical measures to cope with problems related to traffic and transportation should be developed and implemented;
8. the extension of existing installations for downhill and cross-country skiing as well as jumping should be prevented. Renovation and upgrading should be accepted only if they take the protection of nature and the landscape into account. Continue to monitor the various sporting activities practised in the national park and ensure that they remain compatible with the conservation objectives;
9. the best possible integration of new buildings and the renovation of old buildings through respecting the traditional local style should be encouraged;



10. the transition of ownership in the park should be followed closely; an active policy of acquisition of land, which is important for the protection of nature and the activities carried out in the park should be developed.

**Appendix 2: List of participants to the different meetings****5<sup>th</sup> of September 2018**

9.00 – 10.00 Bled TNP Headquarters:

- Aleš Zdešar, Expert Service, Land Management Department
- Andrej Arih, Expert Service, Head of Natural Environment Department
- Igor Zakotnik, Head of Expert Service
- Alenka Mencinger, Expert Service, Department for Sustainable Development
- Špela Stojan, Head of General Administrative Service
- Majda Odar, Head of Information & Education Service

10.00 Visit of the area (Pokljuka):

- Aleš Zdešar, Triglav National Park
- Andrej Arih, Triglav National Park
- Miha Marolt, Triglav National Park, Expert Service
- Tomaž Kralj, Deputy President of TNP Council, Bohinj Municipality representative in the TNP Council
- Aleš Poljanec, Slovenia Forest Service, Head of the Sector for Expert Affairs,
- Andrej Gartner, Slovenia Forest Service, Bled regional Unit, Department of Forest Management Planning

Meeting with the stakeholders involved – on the spot (Stara Fužina, TNP Center Bohinj):

- Jože Sodja – Deputy Mayor, temporary in charge as Mayor of Bohinj Municipality,
- Klemen Langus – Director of Tourism Bohinj,
- Metod Rogelj, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Head of Kranj Regional Unit, Member of the TNP Expert Council
- Tomaž Kralj,
- Majda Odar,
- Igor Zakotnik,
- Alenka Mencinger,
- Saša Roškar, Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Regional Unit Kranj,
- Andrej Arih

**6<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 - TNP Headquarters**

Aleš Zdešar,  
Janez Rakar, Director of the TNP Public Institution  
Igor Zakotnik,  
Andrej Arih,  
Alenka Mencinger,