

CONTENTS

	Page
Terms of reference	3
1. State of conservation of the site	3
2. Conservation of the natural environment	4
2.1 Flora	4
2.2 Fauna	4
3. Alterations completed	4
3.1 Physical alterations	4
3.2 Statutorial, legal and organisational alterations	5
4. Impact of the public	5
5. Scientific research in the park	5
6. Financial resources of the park	6
7. Suggestions	6
7.1 Reactions on the suggestions made in 1980	6
7.2 Possibilities for cooperation with other national parks	7
8. Conclusions	7
9. Literature and maps	8
9.1 Swiss national park	8
9.2 Stelvio national park (Italy)	8

Terms of reference

The European Diploma awarded to the Swiss national park on 27 October 1967 was renewed on 16 October 1972, in 1977, and on 26 October 1982.

During its fifth year of validity the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is required by the relevant regulations (Resolution (73) 4) to consider whether to renew the Diploma for a new period of five years. To this end, an expert is appointed to carry out a new on-the-spot appraisal, taking particular account of the information supplied in the last annual reports.

The Secretariat asked me to make such an appraisal in a letter of 10 June 1985, with the following terms of reference :

- to study the present state of the site and ascertain whether it has improved, deteriorated or remained the same since the date of the award or that of the last renewal
- to analyse the state of conservation of the flora, fauna and landscape (progression or regression of species)
- to examine any alterations (physical or statutory) already carried out or in progress
- to study the impact of the public on the flora, fauna and landscape, and to make proposals for the improvement of the situation
- to study the financial resources allocated for the management of the site.

The on-the-spot appraisal took place on 17 and 18 July 1985. I was accompanied by Mr J.P. Ribaut, Head of the Council of Europe's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

Our host and guide was Dr R. Schloeth, Director of the Park.

We inspected the Il Fuorn (Ofenpass) road, the trail in the Stabelchod Valley, a part of the nature trail and the Minger Valley in the eastern part of the Park. The Park House, the information centre in Zernez, with its new exhibition, was also shown to us by Mr Schloeth.

1. State of conservation of the site

Since the last on-the-spot appraisal, made by Mr E. Leynaud in 1980, neither the supervision or the behaviour of the visitors has changed. As the number of visitors remained stable, no deterioration has taken place.

The name "Swiss National Park" may lead to some confusion for certain persons, as the main objective of the Park is not the enjoyment of the general public. The whole area is managed as a strict nature reserve and visitors are only tolerated on the trails and are subject to strict regulations. As a result of this policy, the area is in an excellent state of conservation.

2. Conservation of the natural environment

2.1 Flora

On the whole the condition of the vegetation has not changed. Even the very dry hot summer of 1983 had no serious effects, but to a certain extent forest deterioration is nearing the Park limits. During our visit, however, no signs of damage by acid rain were seen; the epiphytic lichen vegetation was still luxurious in comparison with that in the Netherlands. In large stretches of old and mature stands of Mountain pine (Pinus mugo), numerous seedlings of Cembran pine (Pinus cembra) were observed; this is perhaps the beginning of a new phase in the succession.

2.2 Fauna

In general, the population densities of Roe deer, Ibex and Chamois remained stable. The number of Red deer, 20 in 1920, has during the last decades shown a steady increase to approximately 2,000 today. These animals live during the five summer months within the Park, causing heavy grazing pressure on the Alpine grassland vegetation and, here and there, upon shrubs and young trees. This cannot however be qualified as overgrazing. In winter they live in the surrounding valleys, sometimes damaging crops.

In general, the management of the Park and the hunters in the neighbourhood agree that the numbers are too high and that a reduction of 50% would lead to an optimal condition, both for the deer and for the vegetation.

The root of this unwanted situation is the fact that, according to hunting laws, deer may only be shot from 9 to 26 September. When the climate during the autumn is mild, the deer remain within the Park limits, where they cannot be shot. However, during the last few years when this has happened, a supplementary shooting period has been granted.

In addition to a shortage of food during the summer season, this extra mortality may be the factor which has led to a stabilisation of numbers during recent years.

A definitive solution may soon be reached. In 1986 a new hunting law will pass the Federal parliament, giving cantonal officers the opportunity to adapt hunting regulations. It is expected that this law will pass the cantonal parliament of Graubunden in the course of 1987 and then biologically sound management of the deer population of the Park and its surroundings can begin.

3. Alterations completed

3.1 Physical alterations

The signposting and the aluminium information plates along the 80 km of trails and at the resting places are still in excellent condition.

The completely renewed exhibition in the Park House is excellent from both the aesthetic and the educational points of view and is much appreciated by the public.

The problem of the speed limit has been solved automatically, since a speed limit of 80 km on normal roads has been introduced throughout the country.

3.2 Statutory, legal and organisational alterations

The transformation of the Park into a public-law foundation (Stiftung) took place in 1984. As a result, relations with the Park House, also a Foundation, have been facilitated. On that occasion, the membership of the Board of the Park Foundation was increased from seven to nine, and representatives of the municipalities involved were from then on also concerned in the management of the Park.

4. The impact of the public

As our visit took place during the peak of the tourist season and under excellent weather conditions, we got a good impression of the impact of the public.

At all car parks, the starting points of the excursions of the majority of visitors, large posters inform the public in several languages about the Park's very strict regulations. These rules are kept, in all respects, by practically everyone. For instance, in 1984 only 53 incidents were reported for 230,000 visitors :

- leaving marked paths	17
- bringing dogs into the Park	15
- picking flowers	6
- illegal camping	13

During the last few years the number of visitors has stabilised at about 230,000. The number of visitors to the Park House at Zernez has also remained stable in spite of the complete renewal of the exhibition. Most visitors are of Swiss nationality. The management of the Park carefully avoids any advertising in order to maintain the number of visitors at this level.

In the exhibition and in leaflets, the public is even asked to pay more attention to other natural areas of the Engadin, but tourist information centres and tour operators cannot be prevented from advertising the Park. In several hotels in Zernez the place-mats put under the dishes three times a day show a panoramic map of the Park, and an offer of special arrangements for Park visitors. The result will be discussed at point 7.1.

At least, modern forms of recreation, such as langlauf skiing and the use of snow scooters, are strictly forbidden in the Park.

5. Scientific research

The number of permits for scientific research within the Park is slightly diminishing and the number of publications of results has sharply decreased in recent years. This gives no ground for uneasiness, as most of the long-term research programmes in the Park are finished. However, as a result of this research the Swiss National Park is one of the best studied natural areas in the world.

In 1984 Professor W. Matthey, who chaired the Scientific Research Committee of the Park for ten years, was replaced by Dr B. Nievergeld. This may well lead to a new research programme, and I feel that a study on the long-term effects of decreasing the grazing on several vegetation types, by means of exclosures, could with advantage be included. It is known, from other areas, that a sudden decrease of grazing pressure can lead to a deterioration of existing systems and to the domination of a few species. This type of research could give information about the optimal rate of decrease expected in coming years.

6. Financial resources of the Park

In general, the budget of the Park remained stable in the period 1980-1985 and financial resources were left unchanged. Because of this, the problem of understaffing, already mentioned in the 1980 report, could not be solved.

7. Suggestions

7.1 Reactions to the suggestions made in the 1980 report

In his report SN-R-DP (80) 34, Mr E. Leynaud made some suggestions for improving the management of the Park - not an easy task in such a well run area. It seems to me worth while paying some attention to the reactions to these proposals.

- Including the ecosystem concept in the information (page 4)

In leaflets and booklets, and on the posters along the trails, much emphasis is laid nowadays on the relations with their environment of several animal species from different groups. The new exhibition at the information centre, inaugurated in June 1984, is focused entirely on this subject and on the functioning of ecosystems.

- The Red deer problem (see item 2)
- Commercialisation of the Park

The activities of travel agencies was mentioned at item 4. The effects have been partly brought to light by an interesting enquiry, made by Mr Schloeth, regarding visitors to the village of Zernez (1000 inhabitants). It showed that in 1984 the income of the hotels of the village could be estimated at 3,000,000 Swiss francs. 80% of their guests declared that they had come to Zernez to visit the Park and/or the information centre. If the situation in the other villaes around the Park is comparable, this should indicate that the economic impact of the Park on its direct surroundings surpasses the costs! It would be worth while to repeat this type of research on a larger scale and at more sites to prove that the conservation of nature is not such a luxury as is often suggested.

- From 1984, local authorities are involved in the management of the Park:
- The creation of a pre-park zone, or extension of the present Park by aquisition of adjacent natural areas, has not been taken into consideration

- The problem of the speed limit on the Ofenpass road has been solved
- In 1980 the need for a deputy director was stressed.

This problem is becoming more and more urgent, as the present director is approaching retirement age.

The successful management of a nature reserve depends not only on the scientific background and the technical capability of the director. He also has to maintain successfully many, often very personal, contacts with farmers, hunters, authorities at local, cantonal and federal level, and with the scientific world. These contacts cannot be taken over by a new director from one day to the next. The continuity of the management of a park, which is of the utmost importance to its well-being, can only be assured by an overlap within the direction of at least five years. The permanent presence of a deputy director would be a better solution.

7.2 Possibilities for cooperation with other national parks

In the south-west, the Swiss National Park has a common border of some 15 km with the Stelvio National Park (Italy). This Park, which covers more than 100,000 ha (6 times as large as the Swiss National Park) is composed as follows : natural areas 43%, alpine meadows 31%, forests 21%. 3.5% of the area is influenced by man and includes villages and roads. 1.4% is strict reserves. 31% is attainable by trails only, while 59% is managed as a landscape park where traditional forms of agriculture and forestry are permitted.

Technical and administrative management are entrusted to the State Agency for National Forests at Bormio (Sondrio). As the landscape, vegetation, flora and fauna are comparable to the Swiss National Park, management problems must be similar.

It seems to me advisable that regular direct contact between the managements of both parks should be arranged within a short time. After an introductory phase, more concrete arrangements might be entered into concerning, for instance, the management of the large fauna or trans-frontier trail. Within the course of the next decade (two renewals of the European Diploma) close cooperation between these two national parks might be achieved.

In this respect the situation in the Waddensea, in the Germano-Luxembourgish Nature Park, or in the western Pyrenees (Odesa and the Western Pyrenees National Park) might be taken as an example. Suggestions to this effect have already been made by the Italian management in 1969 in the report on the Stelvio National Park.

8. Conclusions

After the on-the-spot appraisal of the Swiss National Park, I have come to the following conclusion :

In some ways, the Park forms one of the most difficult objects for such an appraisal, as real problems with the management or with the public, or problems concerning threats from outside, are non-existent. As a consequence, this report has had to be restricted to historical events and marginal suggestions.

In conclusion, I whole-heartedly propose a renewal of the European Diploma for the next five-year period.

1.9 Literature and maps

1.9.1. Swiss National Park

Committee for Scientific research in the National Park, 1979.

Through the Swiss National Park, a scientific guide.

Neuchâtel, 250 pp.

Eidgenössischen Nationalpark-Kommission, 1983.

Der Schweizerische Nationalpark, offizieller Wanderführer.

Davos, 46 pp.

Schloeth, R. and M.F. Broggi, 1978. Il parc nazionale Svizzer.

Samedan, 81 pp. Illustrated guide for the nature trail
in five languages.

Verkehrsverein für Graubünden, 1972. Kleiner Führer durch

den Schweizerische Nationalpark, 11th ed., Davos, 24 pp.

xxxxxxx

Bieder, M., 1972. Panoramakarte der Schweizerische Nationalpark.

Ed.: Verkehrsverein für Graubünden, Chur.

Kümmerly & Frey, Bern. Sheet Graubünden, 1:200.000

Michelin maps. Sheet 24=218 Andermatt-Bolzano 1:200.000

Schweizerische Landeskarte. Sheet 259 1:50.000

1.9.2 Stelvio National Park (Italy)

Agnelli, V. 1969. Der Stilfser-Joch Nationalpark.

Rovereto, 146 pp.

Amministrazione del Parco Nazionale dello Stelvio, 1974.

Carta della vegetazione del Parco nazionale dello

Stelvio, notizia esplicativa (with map and Italian and Ger-
man summaries). Bormio, 87 pp.

Direzione del Parco Nazionale dello Stelvio, Bormio, 1969.

Studi per la valorizzazione naturalistica del Parco
Nazionale dello Stelvio.

I:L'ambiente

II:L'uomo e la conservazione della natura

III:Cartografia

Soglio, 683 pp. and 6 maps. Summaries in Italian, German,
English and French.

XXXXXX

Azienda di Stato Foreste Demaniali: Carta turistica del

Parco nazionale dello 'Stelvio' 1:50.000

Freytag & Berndt sheet 46: Ortler-Ortles 1:100.000