

# NEPAL

## Sagarmantha National Park



### II.1 Introduction

**Year of Inscription** 1979

#### Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters  
Dept. National Parks & Wildlife Conservation,  
(DNPWC)  
Babar Mahal  
GPO Box 860,  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

### II.2 Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** N iii

#### Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:  
“The park has superlative natural phenomena of exceptional natural beauty with the highest mountain peak, Sagarmatha (8,848m). It also satisfies the criteria where natural and cultural elements are found in exceptional combination.”

#### Status of Site Boundaries

- A buffer zone of 275 sq km was added to the property with a gazette notification in January 2002.
- There is currently a proposal to include Makalu Barun National Park (1,500 km<sup>2</sup>) and its buffer zone (830 sq km) as an extension to Sagarmatha WH Site.

### II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- The WH value is considered to have been maintained.
- It is reported that the newly formed ‘Buffer Zone Management Committee’ protested in 2002 against the expansion of the Syangboche airstrip.

### II.4 Management

#### Administrative and Management Arrangements

- A draft management plan for SNP was prepared in 1981 with help from the government of New Zealand.
- The park administration has a network of 9 guard posts shared with the Royal Nepal Army (approx. 250 soldiers) who have been in operation in the park since 1976.
- Relevant legislation includes the National Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act (1973); the Constitution of Nepal (1990) Art.26(4); the Himalayan National Park Regulations (1979); and the Buffer Zone Management Guidelines (1996, 1999).
- In 2002, DNPWC “envisioned a modality of landscape-level biological diversity conservation” involving 7 ecological corridors linking Makalu Barun NP and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in the east; Rolwaling in the west; and Qomolungma Nature Preserve to the north.
- HMG prepared the ‘Nepal Biodiversity Strategy’ in 2002 with the co-operation of UNDP-GEF.
- It is proposed to uphold the customary conservation system of Sherpa forest watchers (*Shingo Ngawa*).

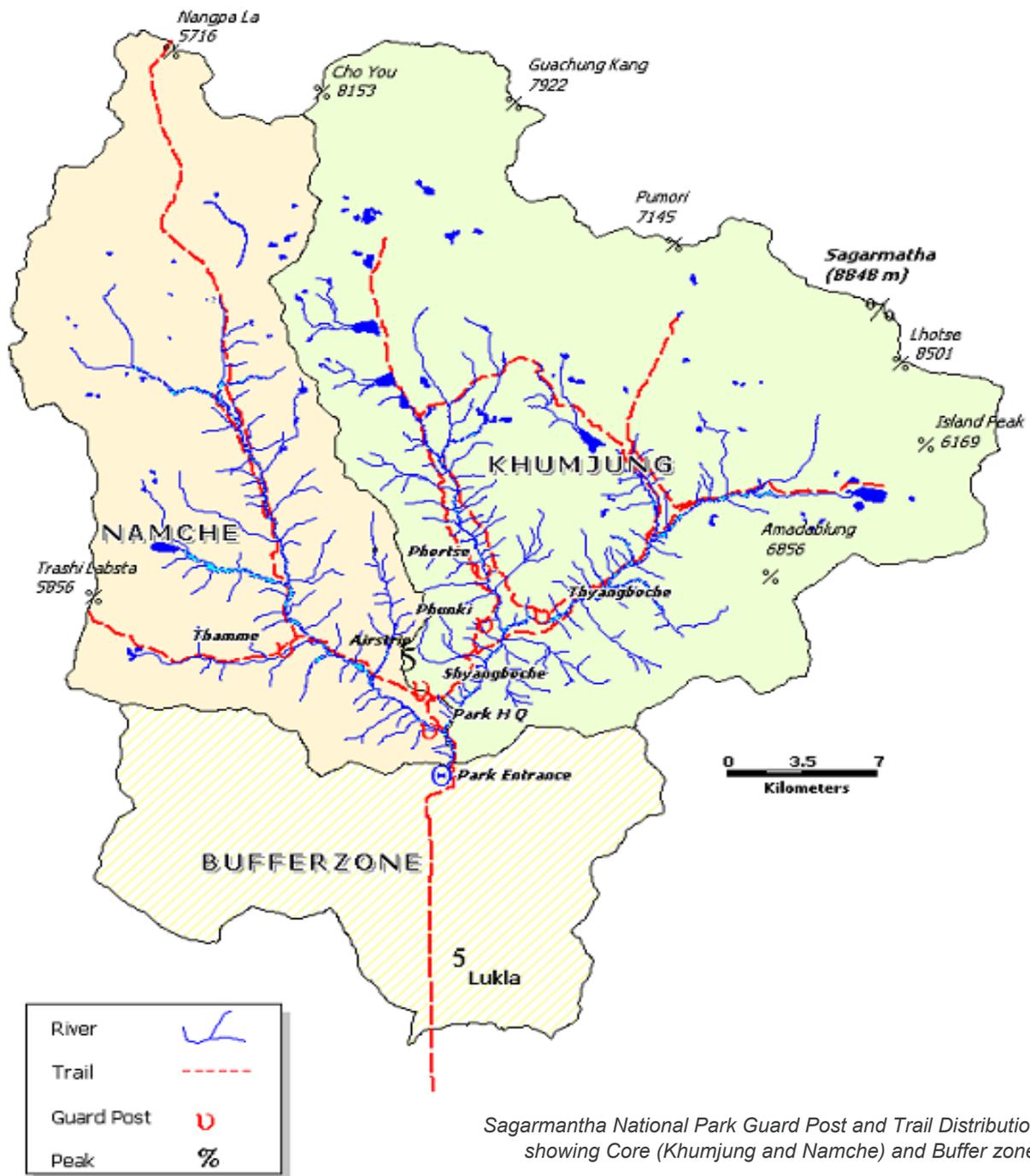
#### Present State of Conservation

- A local NGO, the ‘Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee’ (SPCC) removed some 759,000kg of garbage from the park between 1994-98.
- Bottled drinks were banned in SNP in August 1998.
- Populations of indicator species such as Himalayan tahr and musk deer are reported to have increased since the early 1990s.

#### Staffing and Training Needs

- The SNP office currently has 38 staff with 3 rangers and 24 game scouts.
- Staffing level is considered inadequate. With the recent addition of a buffer zone, there is an urgent need to strengthen the park office.
- Training needs are identified in forest surveys and mapping, information technology, hydropower development, and farming medicinal plants.

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Sagarmatha National Park Guard Post and Trail Distribution, showing Core (Khumjung and Namche) and Buffer zones

**Financial Situation**

- Regular government funding for SNP in 1999-2000 was approximately US\$ 228,051 (83% from the army, the rest from DNPWC).
- Funding is considered inadequate for effective biodiversity monitoring, communication facilities, and library development.
- Major foreign donors include the governments of New Zealand, the UK, Holland, ADB, WWF, IUCN, 'Eco Himal' and the 'Himalayan Trust' founded in 1960 by Sir Edmund Hillary.

- The Buffer Zone Management Committee formed in 1999 receives 30-50% of the park revenue for the implementation of 5-year conservation/development programmes in the buffer zone.
- \* International Assistance from WHF as follows: (i) 1981, US\$52,331 Technical Co-operation for micro hydroelectric project; (ii) 1982, US\$61,995 Technical Co-operation for reforestation consultation; (iii) 1983, Technical Co-operation; (iv) 1998, US\$20,000 Technical Co-operation for sub-regional meeting on "conserving Himalayan Heritage"; US\$15,000 Technical Co-operation for upgrading of visitor facilities at SNP; (v) 1999, US\$7,000 Technical Co-

operation for Donor Meeting; US\$8,8,202 Training for Donor meeting.

## Access to IT

- 1 PC without internet access or printer.
- ARCVIEW GIS software is available at DNPWC HQ in Kathmandu.

## Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics are supplied as from 1971. After a peak of 25,925 in 2000-01, numbers subsequently fell to an estimated 14,000 in 2002 following the escalation in the Maoist insurgency in Nepal.
- In 2002, there were some 380 lodges in SNP (up from 240 in 1996), and a private Sherpa cultural museum in Namche. In fact, "almost all the local Sherpa houses are converted into lodges/houses for visitors".
- There is a need to further improve telephone facilities, signage, and maintain trails and bridges.
- Peak royalty fees range from US\$ 1,500-10,000 per person. According to the tourism policy, "up to 40%" of this sum is destined for environmental conservation. No figures supplied.
- HMG has recently signed a UNDP-financed project entitled 'Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation' for US\$ 1.24 million over 5 years (2002-2007). The project will prepare a comprehensive tourism plan.

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## II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

### Threats and Risks

- Extension plans for the Syangboche airstrip,
- Increasing lodge construction,
- Garbage,
- Glacier Lakes Outburst Floods (GLOF, possibly increasing due to climate change),
- Fire hazards (especially between March and May),
- Tourism pressure,
- Population pressure (mainly migrant porters).

### Counteractive Plans

- No emergency plan has been developed, but park staff, the army, and local people cooperate to control fire hazards.
- 'Architecture Codes of conduct' for the construction of new buildings (especially for hotel/lodges).
- Rehabilitation and compensation payments will be offered for the cancellation of the Syangboche airstrip.

## II.6 Monitoring

### Monitoring Arrangements

- Guard posts submit 'daily log records' to their respective rangers who feed information to the Chief Warden responsible for annual reports.
- In 1991, the Royal Nepal Academy of Sciences & Technology (RONAST) established a high altitude research station at Lobuche. DNPWC and RONAST signed an MoU in December 2001.
- A list of scientific studies is attached. Although the Government does not fund research, external researchers often incorporate the findings of park staff into their publications.

### Monitoring Indicators

- The recent monitoring format of the MSFC/DNPWC contains the following indicators: (i) habitat (water holes, grassland, fire); (ii) endangered species; (iii) conservation education; (iv) BZ management; (v) tourist arrivals; (vi) peak royalties.

## II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

### Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- SNP park staff are unfortunately not consulted for the provision of climbing permits issued by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation and the Nepal Mountaineering Association. DNPWC will develop a "peaks utilisation mechanism"
- WHF support is requested for an improved 'Information Management System' with the relevant equipment and training for field staff to gather data and fill in monitoring reports.

### \* State of Conservation Reports

1997 Bureau CONF.204/2B The Bureau was informed that the Director of Nanda Devi National Park had presented a state of conservation report on the WH property at the meeting of the South Asian World Natural Heritage Site Managers held in January 1997. He reported that no major threats existed to the Park (although the illegal collection of medicinal plants had been recorded) and that no visitors or mountaineering groups were allowed inside the core zone. The Bureau took note of the high level of protection afforded to Nanda Devi and requested that the State Party consider undertaking a feasibility study for specialized (mountaineering) tourism development in the Park.

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### \* State of Conservation Reports (continued)

1997 Bureau CONF.204/2B The Director of Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) presented a state of conservation report for this WH property at the meeting of the South Asian World Natural Heritage Site Managers held in January 1997. The Director noted tourism was placing an ever-increasing energy demand on the sparse vegetation cover and had introduced considerable problems of waste disposal. He proposed that the Park staff, Nepalese Army personnel, and the 3,500 Sherpa community inside SNP shift to using kerosene. However, the Director had been unable to raise the necessary capital, estimated at US\$ 50,000, for making the change. The Director was critical that the results of the scientific studies carried out inside the Park were rarely made available to the management, and called for greater involvement of scientific expertise in resolving practical problems such as energy demands and waste disposal. The Bureau requested IUCN to utilize expertise available in its Kathmandu Office to undertake a field visit to SNP to discuss ways to provide regular management advice.

1998 Committee CONF.203/8rev The Committee noted that site staff and Sherpa families resident in lower elevations had started to shift to the use of kerosene and micro-power plants to meet their energy needs, whilst tourist installations in the higher alpine zones continued to exploit juniper bushes. Restrictions in the number of visitors to the Park is likely to be resisted by the Sherpa community who derive about 75% of their income from tourism. Based on a request submitted by the State Party, the Chairperson had approved a sum of US\$ 15,000 to update information displays at the Park entrance and in Namche Bazaar concerning the growing energy demands of the tourist industry. The site management intended to revise the management plan of the site in connection with the park's 25th anniversary in 2001, detailing the growth in energy demands of visitors and the local population. IUCN further informed the Committee about a seminar held in August 1998 on the Impacts of Tourism Development in SNP, and on a research project under consideration by protected landscape and development agencies in the UK to revise the management plan and tourism development strategy for the property.

1998 Ext Bureau CONF.202/4 The Bureau encouraged the State Party to seek a long-term, strategic approach for managing the increase in the number of visitors and the parallel rise in energy demands. The Bureau requested the Centre and IUCN to co-operate with the State Party to ensure that visitor rates, tourism infrastructure development and energy demand planning become an integral part of the process to revise the site's management plan in connection with the commemoration of Sagarmatha's 25th anniversary in 2001.

1999 Committee CONF.209/14 In accordance with the recommendation made by the Bureau in 1998, the Centre and IUCN facilitated a meeting in March 1999 in London between the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL); the UK Dept. for International Development (DFID); and relevant authorities from HMG of Nepal Ministries of Soils and Forests, and of Tourism and Civil Aviation; and the Chief Warden of SNP (who underwent a 2-week training course in ICPL in August 1999). Continuing negotiations later took place between DFID-Nepal concerning an ICPL/HMGN project entitled "Ecotourism, Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park and the Solu-Khumbu District of Nepal" expected to commence in November 1999. The Centre and IUCN informed the Bureau that the DFID Office in Kathmandu had approved a sum of UK£ 157,000 for the 18-month project which aimed to provide a model for how tourism at WH sites could be managed to improve conservation and community development.

The Dept. of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) of Nepal organised further consultations among stakeholders in and around SNP under a GEF-Funded project seeking to produce: (i) a revised national park management plan; (ii) an integrated ecotourism strategy for the SNP, its buffer zone and the wider Solu-Khumbu District; (iii) a training and resources programme for the SNP administration; (iv) a community-based training & awareness programme; and (v) improved tourism infrastructure for the region. In addition to strengthening rural livelihoods throughout the Solu-Khumbu District, the programme set out to improve the planning and management of conservation and tourism at both the local and national levels.