II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1988

Organisation Responsible for the Report
- Forest Department (DFO), Uttaranchal
  P O Joshimath, Chamoli 246 401
  State of Uttaranchal
  India

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria N iii, iv

Statement of Significance
- Proposed as follows:
  “The area is reputed as one of the most spectacular
  wilderness in the Himalaya and is dominated by
  Nanda Devi Peak which is a natural monument and
  India’s second highest peak. Unlike many other
  Himalayan areas, it is free from human settlement
  and has remained largely unspoilt due to its
  inaccessibility. It will provide the future control site
  for the study of rare flora and fauna in the Himalayan
  region.”
- 7 out of 18 large mammal species found in the park
  are endangered: snow leopard, black bear, brown
  bear, Himalayan Thar, Bharal, musk deer, and
  Serow. It is also home to many threatened birds and
  butterfly.

Status of Site Boundaries
- The current WH property boundary does not need
  any revision. However, a proposal has been
  submitted to UNESCO-MAB to include 524.5 km²
  outside the buffer zone as a ‘transition zone’.
- A further proposal has been submitted to extend the
  WH Site with the inclusion of the Valley of Flowers in
  a serial cluster nomination.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity
- The WH biodiversity value is considered to have
  undergone “phenomenal improvement” following 20
  years of strict protection.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements
- The Nanda Devi National Park (the WH area) is
  managed as the core zone of the Nanda Devi
  Biosphere Reserve. In a natural “bowl”, this ‘Inner
  Sanctuary’ is only open to scientific expeditions.
- Based on the management plan in operation since
  1988-89, an Annual Plan of Operation (APO) is
  prepared every year in April by the district level
  officers for submission to the National Government
  for the release of MAB funds.
- A World Bank eco-development ‘revolving fund’ is
  also being carried out in 14 villages in the buffer
  zone. Eco-development committees are being
  created in 33 villages in the BR to create 5-year
  ‘micro-plans’.
- The existing management plan is being revised as a
  ‘Landscape Plan’ for a period of 10 years.

Present State of Conservation
- The core zone is a strict conservation area with
  minimum disturbance except for scientific monitoring
  purposes (barely 100 people, porters included, have
  entered the Inner Sanctuary post-WH listing).

Staffing and Training Needs
- Altogether, the property is managed by 56 officers
  and staff including the DFO and the field level.
- Staffing level is considered inadequate. The site
  needs an additional 15 forest guards and 2 range
  officers.
- Training needs are identified in conflict resolution;
  state-of-the-art census techniques for elusive
  animals; in the use of surveillance equipment and
  intelligence gathering (including night-viewing
  devices and digital cameras); and in the propagation
  of medicinal plants.

Financial Situation
- Annual funds are provided by the Government of
  India under (i) Development of National Parks and
  Sanctuaries scheme; (ii) MAB project; (iii) Fire
  Protection Scheme. No figures supplied.
- “Considering the future planning, the present funding
  support will be inadequate.”
• Funds are mostly needed for habitat management, infrastructure, high altitude and communication gear, plus for compensation to villagers for damage caused by wild animals.

* International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT
• 1 PC (shortly with internet). At least 3 more PCs are required. No GIS capacity.

Visitor Management
• “There is no future plan of opening tourism or mountaineering in the Inner Sanctuary... Allowing very strictly regulated trekkers up to Dharasi can be thought of if good results of eco-tourism is found in the buffer zone”.
• Special marked trekking routes have been identified in the BZ. Mountaineers with special permission from the International Mountain Federation are only allowed to climb “peripheral peaks” (one 3-room hut is available for these purposes).

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks
• Risk of resurgent poaching and illegal harvesting in the core zone
• Crop raiding by black bears and wild boars
• Leopard predation on domestic cattle
• Potential overgrazing/harvesting of medicinal plants in the buffer zone.

Counteractive Plans
• Risk preparedness is included in the 10-year management plan considered by the State Government.
• Surveillance in the park is divided between short range (3 day) and long range (10 day) patrols.
• “Immediate payment of compensation” for crop raiding and cattle predation for farmers in the buffer zone. Encourage local people to keep cattle in sheds at night.
II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- Scientific monitoring (accompanied by park staff) is undertaken roughly every ten years by a joint team of scientists from different institutions such as the Wildlife Institute of India and GB Pant Institute.
- In 1981-84, a baseline survey was conducted by the Botanical & Zoological Survey of India to prepare checklists of plant and animal species.
- In 1993, a second survey team consolidated future benchmarks by laying study plots, marking study trails, and selecting monitoring ridges.
- With the expertise of the Wildlife Institute of India, “how often to monitor” will be re-examined in 2003.

Monitoring Indicators

- Monitoring at present consists of recording the presence/absence of flagship and indicator species for fauna, and the maximum number of species of flora.
- In 2003, the same group of scientists as in 1993 will study the following indicator species at five identified sites: (i) snow Apollo butterfly, (ii) endangered plants like Aconite and Mecanopsis (per unit area), and (iii) snow leopards (per unit effort for scrapes and tracks) and population of its major prey (blue sheep and musk deer).

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- It would be desirable to have a professional ecologist deputed from the Wildlife Institute of India to permanently supervise monitoring activities in Nanda Devi.
- WHF support may be required for implementation of the proposed 2003 ‘Landscape Plan’ which will fully integrate a BR ‘transition zone’ for grazing rights and eco-development committees.

* 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.

1998 Ext Bureau CONF.202/4 The Bureau was informed that the Deputy Director of the Park had presented a paper on the property at a sub-regional meeting on Himalayan Heritage in Nepal in August-September 1998. The Bureau invited the State Party to extend cooperation between conservation and tourism authorities in order to define a policy on visitor entry and use of the site.

1998 Committee CONF.203/8rev The Committee recalled that the management of the site was based on enforcing a policy of strict protection, and was informed that an Indian Supreme Court ruling of 1996 had suspended, until further review by concerned authorities, the rights of local people to collect forest produce in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, including the WH area. The enactment of the ruling had led to a rise in conflicts between the management and local people. Co-ordination between the Ministry of Tourism and site management also needed to be improved as site-staff had apprehended tourists with permits issued by tourism authorities without consultation with the Park management. In addition, the Deputy Director of the Park was of the view that the boundaries of the WH site could be extended to include the Valley of Flowers National Park and the Khedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Committee invited the State Party to review the site management policy to minimise conflicts with local people, and suggested that the authorities study the feasibility to enlarge the WH area.