

Updated report
on the preservation of UNESCO World Natural Heritage site
Western Caucasus (Russian Federation) (№900) in 2016 and 2017.

1. Response of the Russian Federation in accordance with the Decision of the World Heritage Committee 40 COM 7B.101 and 41 COM 7B.8.

During 2016-2017 the Government of the Russian Federation adopted a number of legislative initiatives, changes were made in the legislation. The adopted legislative acts do not exclude the need for the Russian Federation to implement the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, namely, the obligation to preserve and transfer the heritage object to future generations in an unchanged state. In this regard, the Russian Federation does not intend to use the adopted changes in legislation to the detriment of World Heritage Sites. No actions that actually harmed or harmed the object of the "Western Caucasus" were not produced and will not be produced.

According to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, in the passports (certificates) of nature monuments of the object "Western Caucasus" "Ridge Buynyi", "Upper reaches of the rivers Psheha and Pshehashkha", "Upper river Tsitsa", "Big Thach" - provisions were made to exclude felling on the territory of the Heritage site, including sanitary. Also, construction of linear infrastructure facilities (roads, overpasses, power lines) is prohibited. Felling and other activities that cause damage to the World Heritage Site have been stopped and are not being carried out.

In accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, capital construction, including - objects of tourist, sports and recreational infrastructure on the Lagonaki Plateau, including on the mountains of Fisht and Oshten, is not planned. Use of the territories of the Lagonaki Plateau, other territories of the Heritage Site for the needs of eco-friendly tourism and environmental education occurs in the same degree as it was done at the time of the inclusion of the "Western Caucasus" nomination in the World Natural Heritage List in 1999¹.

¹ At the time of inclusion of the nomination "Western Caucasus" in, these territories have traditionally been used for tourism and recreation. The text of the nomination contains indications of ecological tourism on the territory of the World Natural Heritage Site of the UNESCO "Western Caucasus". *"Having an area of 301,068 hectares, the integrated complex area of the Western Caucasus ensures the preservation and further natural development of a representative complex of ecosystems of almost all types of the Caucasus. The TVPN is represented by a mountain system, the length of which from west to east reaches 97 km, and the width from north to south is 50 km. There are no normal roadways on its territory, so that only ecological tourism can be developed here"; "On the territory of the nature monuments" The Ridge of the Buyny, "The Upper River of the Tsitsa "and the" Upper Rivers of Pshekh and Pshehashkha", the buffer zone of the KGBR in the Republic of Adygea is allowed only those activities that do not violate the state of the natural complex, for example, ecological tourism."* All the development of tourism that has occurred since 1999 to the present day on the territory of the Heritage Site "Western Caucasus" is reduced to the arrangement and intensification of the use of the tourist and excursion infrastructure existing in 1999 with a high degree of its management. For the development of tourism, new territories and routes of the "Western Caucasus" facility are not being used. The entire industrial infrastructure, including hotel, transport, energy, engineering networks, line facilities, etc. - is formed and used outside the World Natural Heritage Site "Western Caucasus".

2. Information on other current issues related to the preservation of the heritage site

As at 12.11.2017, compared to December 2015 - the state of natural complexes Heritage Site and its components do not have a negative dynamics.

Following the program of reintroduction of the leopard to the Caucasus (implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, WWF Russia, with participation of Sochi National Park, the Caucasus Biosphere Reserve, Institute of Ecology and Evolution of Russian Academy of sciences, Moscow Zoo and also with the assistance of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA)). Animals adapted to life in natural conditions.

Preservation of the main types of landscapes of Heritage site:

- mountain-forest landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted. The exception is the natural forest plantations with the inclusion of the Colchis boxwood. In 2014-2017 the entire natural Colchis boxwood in the Western Caucasus was damaged by an insect pest – box tree moth - and died. As a result of the exclusion of the boxwood from the forest, there began a spontaneous transformation of the former boxwood forest on an area of at least 0.5 thousand hectares.

- mountain-meadow landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted;

- mountain-meadow landscape of the biosphere proving ground of the Caucasus Reserve on the Lagonak Plateau - the condition of the meadows demonstrates positive dynamics; the restoration of the plant communities of the Lagonak Plateau continues after excessive pasture loads of the 1980s and 1990s;

- Alpine landscape - the preservation is complete, economic activity has never been held and is not being conducted;

- water objects (rivers, lakes) - the preservation is complete, not used in economic activities.

1. Preservation of species on the territory:

The preservation of all groups of living organisms of the Heritage Site is complete, with the exception of Colchis boxwood. Since 2015, Colchis boxwood has been artificially preserved as the flora of the Western Caucasus.

- there is no reduction in abundance of species on the Heritage Site (note the artificial preservation of the Colchis boxwood as the flora of the Western Caucasus);

- the disappearance of rare protected species of plants (lower, vascular) and lichens \ fungi on the territory of the Heritage Site does not occur

(note the artificial preservation of Colchis boxwood as the flora of the Western Caucasus);

- there continues a positive dynamics in the number of main protected species of mammals - the most sensitive to anthropogenic impact.

The number of the main protected animals in comparison with 1999 survey:

Type of animal	1999 г.	2017 г.
Bison bonasus	190	1050
Red deer	892	1704
Capra caucasica	2421	3177
Chamois	1095	1157
Brown Bear	260	450
Persian Leopard	0	3
Wolf	60	70

2. Management of the Heritage Site is carried out:

with regard to the Caucasus Reserve - by federal authorities and the special federal state budgetary institution "The Caucasus State Natural Biosphere Reserve named after H. G. Shaposhnikov", which is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

with regard to the natural park of the Republic of Adygea "Big Thach" – by the authorities of the Republic of Adygea (regional authorities) and the special state budgetary institution of the Republic of Adygea "Big Thach";

with regard to the remaining territories of the Heritage Site in the Republic of Adygea - by the authorities of the Republic of Adygea (regional authorities) and the special state budgetary institution of the Republic of Adygea "Big Thach";

Main directions of management:

- ensuring the preservation of the territory of the Heritage Site and its natural-and-territorial complexes;

- survey and monitoring of the conditions of the natural-and-territorial complexes of the Heritage Site and their individual elements;

- the formation of a positive attitude of the population towards the Heritage site, nature protection and protected area through environmental education of the population and the development of cognitive tourism.

3. Immediate measures to ensure the protection regime of the Heritage site:

With regard to the Caucasus Reserve:

The Caucasus reserve is protected by a staff of state inspectors, comprising of 76 state inspectors.

With regard to the natural park of the Republic of Adygea "Big Thach" and other territories of the object of the Heritage in the Republic of Adygea:

protected areas are protected by official authorized state bodies. Control over compliance with the regime is carried out by the Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of the Republic of Adygea and the Forest Management of the Republic of Adygea.

During 2016 and 2017, 311 violations of the regime for the protection of the territory of the Heritage Site were revealed, including:

- Illegal presence on the territory - 239;
- illegal hunting and fishing - 19;
- violation of fire safety rules - 13,
- contamination of the territory - 1.
- other violations - 39.

There have been seized 5 guns, 38.5 kg of illegally obtained fish.

The management of the Caucasus Reserve is executed on the basis of a plan approved by the authorized body of the Russian Federation, supervising the Caucasus Reserve. Relevant planning documentation is drafted, accepted, approved, agreed, executed and stored in the manner prescribed by the current rules and regulations.

The management of the natural park of the Republic of Adygea "Big Thach" and the rest of the sites of the Heritage Site in the Republic of Adygea is carried out on the basis of planning documents of public authorities of the Republic of Adygea.

3. No major changes (construction, extraction of natural resources, nature use, other actions that may damage the preservation of the Heritage Site and impede the fulfillment of the obligations of the Russian Federation in transferring the Heritage Site to subsequent generations in an unchanged state) are not forecasted and will not be produced within the World Heritage Site.

