

Summary
of International Seminar
“Management of World Heritage Sites in the Russian Federation”
Vilm, Germany
11-17 August 2003

Organized by: the World Heritage Center, UNESCO, IUCN, and the Natural Heritage Protection Fund (Russia) with support from the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety at the International Academy for Nature Conservation, Isle of Vilm.

The Seminar dealt in lectures, case studies and discussions with the following topics:

- Implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Russia;
- Overview of the Convention with respect to natural and mixed sites and cultural landscapes;
- World Heritage and the Protected Areas System;
- Management planning for Russian World Heritage sites;
- State of Conservation of World Heritage sites: Reactive Monitoring;
- Periodic Reporting;
- IUCN's role in the Convention;
- Benefits of the Convention: Experiences from other countries;
- Fund raising and awareness building for World Heritage, development of alternative ways of nature management;
- World Heritage and the World Parks Congress.

The Seminar primarily focused on three major topics:

- Development of a variety of the World Heritage medium-term program focusing on protection of the environment and biodiversity: main goals, results and actions. Support given to the program by the Russian Federation Government and governments of the Members of the Federation.
- Periodical reporting on conservation of the World Natural Heritage sites and its application in the implementation of the Program: major logistics aspects and procedure issues that should be taken into account.
- First priority activities for the following two years that may help the managers of the Russian WH sites and their colleagues in enhancing efficiency of their management and efficacy of the World Heritage Convention.

After the Seminar the following suggestions have developed:

Issue 1: the World Heritage in Russia medium-term program

- Development of a special Federal Program providing support to World Heritage sites (development of a implementation concept for the Convention in its “natural” part);
- Introduction of amendments into the Russian Federation legislation and regional legal acts to define the legal status of World Heritage sites;
- Employees of federal protected areas should become civil servants with all corresponding responsibilities, authority, guaranties and endowment and maintenance;
- Establishment of WH site coordination centers (which is especially important for sites incorporating several protected areas with different statuses); organization and coordination of all activities related to implementation of the Convention. The

coordination councils should become a basis for the future Association of Russian World Natural Heritage Sites;

- Development of management plans for Russian WH sites (which is especially important for sites incorporating several protected areas with different statuses);
- Development of a system of reactive monitoring in WH sites; development of a unified method of acquiring, processing and presentation of information on the state of conservation of WH sites;
- Development of the ecological education system (visit centers, education centers at schools, local administrations, etc; ecological trails, information boards, photo-stands, banners, etc.);
- Awareness building for WH sites. Publishing activities, development of web-sites for WH sites, maintenance of direct communication channels between the sites and UNESCO;
- Ecotourism development, development of appropriate tourism infrastructure, definition of the maximum allowable recreation load;
- Search for funding for the WH Sites Support Federal Program;
- Establishment of trust funds of international and regional levels;
- Direct financial assistance to WH sites through grants and agreements and etc., to carry out specific projects;
- Organization of annual training seminars, working meetings, exchange programs with foreign WH sites, and etc.;
- Description of the borders of Russian WH sites;
- Preparation of new nominations:

Preparation and submission to the World Heritage Center of nomination applications for already prepared nominations (Plateau Poutorana, Magadansky Nature Reserve, Commander Islands);

Priority preparation of trans-boundary nominations “The Green Belt of Fennoscandia” (Russia-Finland-Norway) and “Steppes of Dauria” (Russia-Mongolia-China).

In the future: preparation of new nominations: Astrakhansky Nature Reserve, Tungussky Nature Reserve, Far East Sea Nature Reserve, Beringia.

Issue 2: Periodical Reporting and Reactive Monitoring.

Procedure: the RF Ministry of Natural Resources coordinates periodical reporting. Collection of the information uses the following plan: RF Natural resources Ministry – Regional Natural Resources Departments – WH sites. Collected information then goes to the World Heritage Protection Fund to be used in production of reports according to the format provided by the World Heritage Center. After consultations and agreement with the Natural

Resources Ministry, the report goes to the World Heritage Center through the Russian World Heritage Committee and the Russian Federation Permanent Mission at UNESCO.

Deadlines: The first part of the report should be at the World Heritage Center in the summer of 2004; Part two – summer of 2005.

Importance of periodical reporting:

Overview of the current situation with implementation of the Convention.

Initiation of activities related to implementation of the Convention (further development of the monitoring system, development of management plans, specification of WH sites' borders and etc.; please, see Section 1).

Management plans: While preparing periodical reports, it might be necessary to develop a management plan for one of the existing areas that in the future will be an example for management plans for other WH sites.

Reactive monitoring:

- Upgrade and make simpler the system of passing information to the World Heritage Center: requests of the Center to the national World Heritage Committee should **be directly handed over to the responsible official in the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation** (M.I. Moskvina).
- Consider normal the submission of alternative information on reactive monitoring (from scientific, non-governmental and other organizations and etc.) to the World Heritage.

Issue 3: First priority activities for the following two years.

- **Develop a concept** of implementation of the World Heritage Protection Convention in the Russian Federation by the end of 2003.
- **Revise laws on specially protected natural areas** (removing inconsistencies with the Land and Forest Codes and etc.). Introduce additions defining the legal status of the WH sites.
Clarify the situation with dual-use lands: as an alternative for National Parks incorporated into the WH sites, finance buying out dual-use lands to give them to the national parks. The laws should state a fixed fee (in regions) for visiting protected areas (national parks). The laws should envisage higher fines for violating the nature preserve regime. Also develop a clear procedure of establishing protection zones, regime and order of management.
- Appointment of an official from the Russian Federation Natural Resources Ministry **Co-Chair of the National World Heritage Committee** of the Russian Federation
- Address under the supervision of the RF Natural Resources Ministry the issues of **developing management plans** by first of all introducing order and procedure to this process. Develop a management plan for one of the WH areas while preparing periodical reports in 2004-2005.
- **Search for funding** for measures described in the management plan (state funding (scientific research, experimental and construction activities), UNDP, trust funds, short-term grants);

- By the end of 3002 **prepare and submit to the World Heritage Center applications for nominations** “Plateau Poutorana”, Magadansky Nature Reserve, Commander Islands. The Plateau Poutorana portfolio should be at the World Heritage Center by February 1, 2004.
- **Awareness building for WH sites** (publications. Information boards, web sites and etc.). We are discussing with the World Heritage Fund the possibility to provide support to (in 2004) installing information boards in protected areas incorporated into the WH sites.
- **Training seminars in 2004:**
 - «Sustainable Development as the Basis of Preservation of World Natural Heritage Sites. Management planning.» (April-May 2004, Curonian Spit). We are discussing the possibility to help organize this seminar with the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.
 - «Ecotourism as Alternative Nature Management in World Natural Heritage Sites» (September 2004, Teberdinsky State Nature Reserve). We are discussing the possibility to help organize this seminar with the GEF France.