

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Lapponian Area
<i>Location</i>	County of Norrbotten, Municipalities of Gällivare, Jokkmokk, and Arjeplog
<i>State Party</i>	Sweden
<i>Date</i>	29 September 1995

Justification by State Party

The existence of the Saami cultural environment in this area meets **criteria iii and v**. It is representative of the Saami culture and environment in the whole circumpolar zone (Fennoscandia) and is the most authentic and best preserved area of its kind.

Note This property is nominated as a mixed site. This evaluation is concerned solely with the nomination under the criteria for cultural properties, the evaluation of the natural qualities being covered in the IUCN evaluation. This evaluation should therefore be read in conjunction with that of IUCN.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the Lapponian area ensemble is a *site*. It should also be considered as a cultural landscape of the type proposed in paragraph 39 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

History and Description*History*

The nominated area in northern Fennoscandia was first occupied in the Palaeolithic period, towards the end of the last Ice Age, about 10,000 years BP. The settlers were nomadic hunter-gatherers, subsisting principally on wild reindeer, and traces of their occupation is found in the form of hearths and house-foundations.

The present-day peoples of the area, the Lapps or Saami, as they call themselves, who speak a Finno-Ugrian language, arrived from the east 4000-5000 years ago. At the same time other peoples arrived in the region from the south, settling along rivers and lake-shores. The Saami began hunting wild reindeer, like their predecessors, but slowly replaced them by domesticated herds, with which they migrated during the year. They practised a form of transhumance, spending the summer in the mountains and the winters in the coniferous forests to the east.

Description

The nominated area lies close to the Arctic Circle in northern Sweden. There is a mountain landscape in the west and a *taiga* region to the east. Saami in the nominated area still live in the mountains during the summer, especially in the western part near some of the large lakes. Family groups occupy small cabins, which have replaced the traditional dwellings (*goahhtes*). They are 200-250 in number, with 30,000-35,000 reindeer. There are no summer camps in the eastern part: the reindeer owners there live in the neighbouring villages and municipalities. There are no permanent settlements occupied throughout the year anywhere in the nominated area.

Management and Protection

Legal status

Almost all the land in the nominated area is protected, either as National Parks (of which there are four) or Nature Reserves under the provisions of the 1964 Nature Conservation Act. Three components of the nominated area (the Sillitelma glacier area, the Tjolta valley, and the Rapa valley delta in Lake Laitaure) lie outside the Parks, but these are specially protected through special regulations applying to untouched, continuous mountain areas in the 1987 Natural Resources Act. Strict byelaws control activities by visitors that may damage the qualities for which the area is protected.

Ancient monuments and cult sites connected with the Saami are protected under the provisions of the 1988 Ancient Monuments Act.

Management

Apart from four small settlements in Sjaunja and part of the Rapa valley delta land, the entire area is owned by the Swedish State through the Environmental Protection Agency or the National Property Board.

The Agency is responsible for grant-aid, general supervision, and management planning in the National Parks. Through its mountain branch in Jokkmokk the County Administration of Norrbotten is responsible for general administration and management.

Protection, supervision, and management of Saami monuments is the responsibility of the County Administration in Luleå, working with the Central Board of Antiquities

Management plans have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for the Muddus and Padjelanta National Parks and are under preparation and scheduled for completion in 1995-96 for the Sarek and Stora Sjöfallet Parks. Habitat-related monitoring forms part of the Environmental Protection Agency's national programme; special efforts are being made to monitor the impact of reindeer grazing and trampling on vegetation, and also on their use of motorized transport.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Rigorous protection and management over since 1909, when the first National Parks were established in the area, has ensured a high level of conservation. Limited visitor facilities (trails, bridges, overnight cabins) were built in Padjelanta and Muddus parks in the 1960, but little else, since the entire area is preserved and managed primarily as a wilderness area.

The Saami retain their traditional rights relating to pasturage, felling, fishing, and hunting and to the introduction of dogs into the protected areas; these come within the purview of the Reindeer Husbandry Act. The impact of their use of motorized transport is being studied by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of its monitoring programme (see above).

Authenticity

The authenticity of the landscape itself is not open to question, nor is the overall economic process of transhumance and seasonal reindeer grazing. The use of motorized transport by Saami herdsmen is, however, a more recent phenomenon. It can be argued that this is no more than an application of technological developments for a traditional purpose. It does, however, have a potentially deleterious and irreversible impact on the natural environment, and so needs to be taken into account in management plans.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An expert mission selected jointly by ICOMOS and IUCN visited the area in June 1996.

Qualities and comparative analysis

Pastoral transhumance landscapes of this kind were at one time common throughout the northern hemisphere. However, these practices have been rendered obsolete or been abandoned in many parts of the world; and the area proposed in this nomination is one of the last and among the best preserved of those few that survive.

ICOMOS observations

ICOMOS draws the attention of the State Party and the World Heritage Committee to the fact that it believes this property should be treated as a cultural landscape (see *Category of property* above).

The joint mission was especially impressed by the commitment of the Saami people, through its Parliament and expressed by individuals that it met, to the continuance of the traditional way of life and the conservation of the region for future generations.

Recommendation

ICOMOS recommends that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of ***cultural criteria iii and v***:

The Lapponian area of northern Sweden is one of the last and unquestionably the largest and best preserved examples of an area of transhumance, involving summer grazing by large reindeer herds, a practice that was widespread at one time and which dates back to an early stage in human economic and social development.

ICOMOS, October 1996