

BULGARIA

Pirin National Park

Brief description

Extending over an area of 27,400 ha and lying at an altitude of 1,008–2,914 m in the Pirin mountains in south-west Bulgaria, Pirin National Park has a limestone Balkan landscape with lakes, waterfalls, caves and pine forests. The rugged mountains, with some 70 glacial lakes scattered throughout them, are home to hundreds of endemic and rare species, many of which are representative of the Balkan Pleistocene flora. The mountains also have diverse and unique landscapes of great aesthetic value.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1983

Agency responsible for site management

- National Nature Protection Service Directorate under the Ministry of Environment and Water
Gladstone Street 67
1000 Sofia
e-mail: tzvety@moew.government.bg
website: www.moew.government.bg
- Pirin National Park Directorate
Bulgaria Street 4
2770 Town of Bansko
e-mail: pirin_np@mail.bg
website : pirin-no.com

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria N (i), (ii), (iii)

Justification provided by the State Party

N. P. "Pirin" is a standard of the biome "mixed mountain systems with intricate zoning" of the Balkan biogeographic province and its characteristic ecosystems; reliable refuge for hundreds of endemic and rare species; centre of speciation; various landscapes with great aesthetic value.

As provided in IUCN evaluation

En raison du grand nombre d'espèces endémiques et relictuelles qu'il abrite, le Parc national de Pirin fournit un exemple de ce qu'était la flore du pléistocène dans les Balkans (critère i). Il est en

outre éminemment représentatif de l'évolution permanente de la flore indigène dans cette partie de l'Europe (critère ii) et il offre de magnifiques paysages de montagnes calcaires (critère iii).

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement

- Statement of significance does not adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- Proposal for text is made in the nomination for the extension of the boundaries of the Pirin National Park World Heritage Property
- Additional change proposed by State Party: change to Official Description

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate
- State Party indicates that the park has been expanded from 27,400 ha at original inscription to 40,356 ha today
- State Party preparing a new nomination which aims at inscribing the overall territory of the Pirin National Park onto the World Heritage List
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined
- With the new nomination for extension of the boundaries of the Pirin National Park World Heritage Property, State Party is not proposing a buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained but there have been significant changes to the site

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Protected Areas Act (1999)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- National Park (or other national protected area)

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group: yes; according to the Protected areas Act, the management, control, and assignment of the activities in Pirin National Park are implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Pirin National Park Directorate
- Site coordinator on full-time basis

- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is in place
- Implementation commenced: 08.2004
- Management plan considered adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Pirin National Park Directorate

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget: 706,500 BGN (353,250 Euros) for completion of management activities during 2004
- Extra funding provided by World Heritage Fund for assistance in the preparation of new nomination (see above)
- contributions by national and international agencies to specific activities, including: interpretation trail suitable for disadvantaged people funded by the National Trust Eco-Fund in 2004; funding for elaboration of management plan provided by Bulgarian Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Programme in 2001; in 2005, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation funded project to fund the establishment of the scientific and consultative council and to promote the participation of the local stakeholders
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- number of staff: 54 at full-time

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management.

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Annual training courses organised by the Ministry of Environment and Waters, which includes courses on: the application of national

legislation in the field of nature and biodiversity preservation; the knowledge and application of the requirements of international conventions and agreements in the field of nature and biodiversity preservation, including the Convention for Preservation of the World Heritage; specialized training in flora and fauna; specialized training in public relations

- Further training needs are identified by State Party in the following areas: involving funding organizations; the use of GIS in the site's management; attracting tourists; involving the local population in the Reserve's problems and management

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: only visitors to huts available – 20,807 in period of April to October 2000 (no trend given)
- Visitor facilities: marked tourist routes and interpretative paths, an educational path intended for people with specific needs such as on wheel-chairs or the blind, information stations, Visitor and Information Centre including library, guards at huts, huts and shelters with an overall capacity of 1800 beds
- Visitor needs: adequate

10. Scientific Studies

- Monitoring exercises and studies related to the value of the site: studies were made during the period 2001-2002 for the purpose of preparing the Park's Management Plan. Inventory of the forests, flora and fauna were made, as well as studies of the tourist activities and traditional pasture use
- Studies used for management of site: The results of the studies were used mainly in differentiation of the zones within the National park, as well as in determination of specific regimes and norms for utilization of the particular zones according to their conservation value
- Other: a database is being created including all publications based on scientific studies carried out on the site

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on publications

- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Activities to promote Pirin as a World Heritage site and to raise awareness of conservation issues include: yearly photographic competitions, open air events for children, concerts, exhibitions, eco-camps, field trips in the high mountain, various written and film media designed to promote and educate community about park activities
- Web site: www.pirin-np.com
- No local participation in site management

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 25th (2001); 26th (2002)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 10th (1986); 15th (1991); 24th (2000); 25th (2001); 26th (2002); 27th (2003); 28th (2004); 29th (2005)

Conservation interventions

- Conservation/restoration works: the main purpose of the management of the National park aims at conservation of the great biological diversity that occurs within the protected area, as well as typical landscapes. For the purpose different zones with different regimes for use were determined by the management plan of the National Park. The control over their fulfilment is provided by the National Park Directorate
- Present state of conservation: Good

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure (skiing), environmental pressure (waste disposal), natural disasters (fires and avalanches), environmental
- Specific issues: soil erosion, homeless cats and dogs

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme in place; Administered by the Executive Environmental Agency within the Ministry of Environment and Water

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation

- Strengths of management: the main achievements aimed at conservation of the site are as follows:

1. A management plan for the whole National park territory, including the WH Property was prepared and is being implemented. The management plan provides zoning of the territory and determines a specific regime for each zone according to its conservation value.
2. A digital model of the protected territory was elaborated.
3. The conservation status of the forest's ecosystems, the populations of indicative plant and animal species, and abiotic factors are monitored on an annual basis.
4. A database of abiotic and biotic factors is maintained.
5. Annually, the National Park Directorate prepares special plans for management activities to be carried out in accordance with the Management plan.
6. The Enterprise for managing of environmental activities under the MOEW ensures funding for the implementation of the activities.

- Weaknesses of management: the Management plan of the National Park has been applied for quite a short time and so far it is not realistic to say with certainty what its weaknesses are.

According to the Protected areas Act, the Management plans of protected areas, which are "National parks", such as Pirin National Park, have to be considered at a Public hearing on every 4 years.

After 4 years pass since enforcement of this particular management plan, public discussion will be organized to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses