

SWEDEN

Laponian Area

Brief description

The Arctic Circle region of northern Sweden is the home of the Saami, or Lapp people. It is the largest area in the world (and one of the last) with an ancestral way of life based on the seasonal movement of livestock. Every summer, the Saami lead their huge herds of reindeer towards the mountains through a natural landscape hitherto preserved, but now threatened by the advent of motor vehicles. Historical and ongoing geological processes can be seen in the glacial moraines and changing water courses.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1996

Agency responsible for site management

- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Blekhölmsterrassen 36
106 48 Stockholm
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2. Statement of Significance

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

Justification provided by the State Party

The Swedish mountains in general are often called Europe's last wilderness, which is only partly true. Human activity has certainly affected the mountain landscape, but the claim is justified in comparison with other regions.

Thus the Laponian World Heritage Area consists of the largest single block of unspoiled, wild and protected landscape in the Swedish mountains and taiga area, 9 400 km². The area has an exceptional combination of natural features and geological and physiographical formations - high scenic values, high mountains, plains, primeval forests, mire habitats, wild rivers, lakes, delta lands, wildlife and rare flora. It contains the whole gradient of nature types, habitats, from the taiga to the lower mountains to the alpine high mountains and mountain plains, with many sites of immense value for preservation of biological diversity. Thus, the nominated area is a complex of conservation units that together comprise an area of "outstanding

universal value". This area meets all four criteria for designation as a World Heritage Area - Natural Property - in accordance with Article 2 of the Convention. At the same time it is a valuable cultural area for the Saami people.

I-II Earth's evolutionary history and on-going geological and biological processes

In the nominated area there is a wide variety of features demonstrating the effects of the ice age and ongoing processes, for example the high peaks in Sarek, Akka and Sulitelma massifs with their glaciers, the Rapa river with its valley and delta in Laitaure lake, the canyons and deep ravines in Muddus, Sjaunja's vast mires of different kinds, and Padjelanta's large mountain plain, lakes and intact river system. Well-developed geomorphological features that illustrate the origin and ongoing processes in the area include monadnocks, kursu valleys, sandurs, tundra polygons, U valleys, glacial cirques, glacial moraines, talus accumulations, drumlins, weathering phenomena and palsa bogs. These are all outstanding sites and features which represent significant ongoing geological and biological processes. At the same time they illustrate the evolutionary history of the Earth.

III Exceptional natural beauty

The Laponian World Heritage Area consists of different landscapes of exceptional natural beauty, as is exemplified by the number and diversity of different habitats and scenic places dispersed throughout the four parks and two reserves.

IV Habitats - biological diversity

The vegetation in the Laponian World Heritage Area displays an impressive variation due to the area's large size and diversity of altitudinal, geographic and topographic influences. Unspoiled habitats of many species of wildlife typical of the northern Fennoscandian region are contained in their entirety in the nominated area.

Wildlife populations are a noted and popular attraction, including some species which are considered as vulnerable or rare such as brown bear, wolverine, lynx, otter, golden eagle, white-tailed eagle and gyrfalcon and the magnificent moose population in the Rapa valley in Sarek.

As provided in IUCN/COMOS evaluation

[IUCN] The 1990 report evaluating Sjaunja suggested adding additional areas. These and others are included in the current nomination. They include; Sjaunja Nature Reserve, Padjelanta, Sarek, Stora Sjöfallet and Muddus National Parks, Stubba Nature Reserve linking Sjaunja Nature

Reserve with Muddus National Park. Sulitehna with alpine and glacier landscape, Tjuolta incorporating a river valley south of Sarek. and Laitaure which includes a rapidly developing delta system.

There has already been regional and international recognition of major components of the current nomination in the award of the Council of Europe's European Diploma to Sarek. Muddus and Padjelanta National Parks. The nomination also includes two Ramsar Sites in Sjaunja and in the Rapa Valley Delta of Sarek National Park.

The nominated area contains all the processes associated with glacial activity such as U-shaped valleys, moraines, talus slopes, drumlins, presence of large erratics and rapidly flowing glacial streams. It has excellent examples of ice and frost action in a tundra setting including formation of polygons and an area of spectacularly collapsing and growing pulsas. Glacial rivers originating in the snowfields continue to cut through bedrock. Large unvegetated areas illustrate the phenomenon of weathering. The site also contains a record of humans being part of these ecosystems as far as 7000 BP. The site thus meets criterion i.

The site is considered to meet criterion ii. The importance of the vast mire complex of Sjaunja has been recognized by its Ramsar site designation and is the largest in Europe outside Russia. This area is virtually impenetrable by human beings except during winter. The area has primeval coniferous forest with dating indicating ages as old as 700 years. Natural succession continues here unimpaired.

The area meets criterion iii. with its great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty. The snow-covered mountains in Sarek and Sulitelma are not only magnificent to see but are a text book of glacial-related geomorphology. The large alpine lakes in Padjelanta, with the mountain backdrop on the Swedish/Norwegian border are of exceptional beauty. The extensive Rapa Valley provides a total contrast with the alpine areas. Particularly noteworthy is its very active delta area, surrounding cliffs and rocky outliers with sheer faces plunging to the delta. The existence of the Saami culture ranging from the traditional birch and turf kata to contemporary cabins adds to the aesthetic value of the site as does its link with the eminent botanist Carl von Linne/Carolus Linnaeus.

[ICOMOS:] 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.

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.

Committee Decision

Bureau (June 1996): the Bureau recommended that the World Heritage Committee inscribe the nominated property on the basis of natural criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). The Bureau considered that the site is of outstanding universal value as it contains examples of ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes, a great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty and contains significant biological diversity including a population of brown bear and alpine flora. It was noted that the site meets all conditions of integrity. The Bureau also recommended inscription under cultural criteria (iii) and (v) as the site is one of the last and largest examples of pastoralism with transhumance. The Bureau encouraged the Swedish authorities (a) to continue to work with the Saami people on the environmental impact of reindeer herding, (b) to extend the inventory of species and (c) to consolidate management planning for a single World Heritage area. The Bureau would welcome consideration being given to the possibility of a transboundary site with Norway.

Bureau (December 1996): in June 1996, the Bureau recommended that the Committee inscribe this property: The Laponian Area Precious Nature - Saami Culture, on the World Heritage List based on cultural criteria (iii) and (v). In accordance with the wishes of the Swedish authorities, and following a proposal by ICOMOS, the Bureau recommended to change the name of this property and incorporate a minor addition to the ICOMOS citation: The Laponian region of northern Sweden which was continually occupied by the Saami population since prehistoric times, 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.

Session (1996): the Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of natural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) and cultural criteria (iii) and (v). The Committee considered that the site is of outstanding universal value as it contains examples of ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes, a great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty and significant biological diversity including a population of brown bear and alpine flora. It was noted that the site meets all conditions of integrity. The site has been occupied continuously by the Saami people since prehistoric times, is one of the last and unquestionably 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. The Committee underlined the importance of the interaction between people and the natural environment. Furthermore, it recommended that the Swedish authorities continue to work with local Saami people, extend the inventories on species, consolidate the management plan for this site and would welcome the consideration of a transboundary site with Norway. The name of the property has been changed to "The Laponian Area".

- State Party proposes a new Statement of Significance for the Laponian World Heritage area

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate;
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- No agreements, laws mentioned

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction no entrance fee, national park, Reindeer-herding

Management/Administrative Body

- No steering group: extensive efforts have been made and various forms of co-operation have been tested, and various types of document have been prepared. During 2002-2003, an attempt was made to develop a mutually

agreeable management plan. But despite a broad and process-oriented approach, it was not possible to gain sufficient acceptance for the resulting proposal, and co-operation between the parties that are primarily affected by the establishment of the world heritage site was not adequate to the task. The sources of the difficulty derive primarily from fundamental disagreements concerning rights to land and water, and the extent to which current legislation provides for the delegation of certain tasks to bodies comprised of interested parties. During 2003, the Norrbotten County Administrative Board discussed the continuing work in and around Lapponia with the Saami villages, the municipalities and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The Board presented a proposal that was based on identifying areas of agreement and using these as a starting point from which to achieve specific, concrete results that benefit all parties involved. The proposal was rejected by the Saami villages, and the partnership group was dissolved. Subsequently, the Saami villages submitted to the national government a proposal for Saami management of the Lapponia World Heritage Site. The proposal was referred from the government to different authorities concerned in the spring of 2004. The government has not yet taken a position on the proposal

- Management by the State Party; management under protective legislation; management under contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party; management under traditional protective measures or customary law
- No site manager
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: the County Administrative Board of Norrbotten

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- The County Administrative Board of Norrbotten; The management is not centralized to one manager why the costs are spread on different partners, why a total cost is hard to present

- Extra funding has been drawn from World Heritage status
- Resources from national resources and EU structural funds: - "Laponia— A Sustainable World Heritage Site", "Gateway to Laponia" and the county administrative board conducted a public information campaign during 1998-2000
- Funding available for the adequate management of the site: sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 8

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

- Very good: conservation
- Good: management, education
- Average: promotion
- Bad: interpretation; visitor management

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

- Personnel of the county administrative board are able to draw upon national expertise, as well as education programmes and conferences that are offered within a number of subject areas related to nature conservation, supervision, nature and culture management, public information and visitor management

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: no
- Visitor facilities: major visitor facilities in the Laponia area are limited to the Muddus and Padjelanta national parks. Muddus national park has an extensive system of hiking trails. The facilities in conjunction with the trail include four major bridges, a large bird watching tower and four cabins with beds. A hiking trail, the so called Padjelanta trail, leads through Padjelanta national park, and to some extent through Stora Sjöfallet and Sarek national parks. Roughly 90 km of the trail lead through the national park and seven places with cabins can be found along the trail. Accommodations are also available at hotels, mountain stations and youth hostels at the following places in the vicinity of the Laponia area; Ritsem, Vietas, Saltoluokta, Porjus and Kvikkjokk
- No tourism/visitor management plan

10. Scientific Studies

- Monitoring exercises
- The report discusses how the existing material can be used in environmental surveying, world heritage status surveying and what can be used as indicators in the regional follow up of Sweden's national environmental objectives

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
- Need for awareness raising
- The municipalities of Jokkmokk and Gällivare has established a World Heritage Award which is presented annually, starting with 2003-2004;
- Several web sites available
- The county administrative board purchases some services from the local population

Education, information and awareness building activities

- At the local level, school pupils have a good awareness of the Laponia World Heritage Site. The level of awareness among the rest of the local population varies. Increased public information on the World Heritage site is needed
- Conveying knowledge about the Laponia World Heritage Site is a high-priority objective of the Municipality of Jokkmokk's planning for children's programmes and the education system. The Child & Education Plan is formally adopted by the municipal council. The Laponia World Heritage Site is included in the curriculum from pre-school through secondary school. Included in the project, "Laponia— Sustainable World Heritage", is the training of guides. Some thirty individuals are to be trained and certified as guides by year 2005

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- There has only been minor conservation interventions at the site since inscription

- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure
- The mountain area in Sweden is very windy. There is an ongoing discussion about Windmills just outside the Laponian area. It can be a possible threat to the visual integrity

13. Monitoring

- No monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: Many different environmental monitoring activities are being conducted within the Laponia site and its surroundings. Work is currently in progress to develop indicators for use in following up progress toward the environmental objective "A Magnificent Mountain Landscape". However, there are no plans to develop a system designed specifically for the Laponia World Heritage Site

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: Awareness of the natural and cultural values amongst both local people and visitors
- Strengths of management: an Internet web site for visitors has been developed as part of the project, "Laponia— Sustainable World Heritage". Simple brochures on the World Heritage site have also been produced in connection with the project. In addition, heritage site guides have been trained. Ájtte Museum in Jokkmokk is dedicated, among other things, to Saami culture and special aspects of the Swedish mountains' natural and human history. In 2004 the museum launched a web site with extensive information on life in Laponia, including its landscape and history ("Focus Laponia": www.laponia.info). A special exhibition on natural and cultural features of Laponia is being prepared
- Weaknesses of management: there is no agreement on how to organize the management

Future actions:

- Management plan
- For the time being, the county administrative board is awaiting the national government's decision on the management question
- Activity does not require funding from World Heritage Fund