

Updated report on the state of conservation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Virgin Komi Forests” (Russian Federation, No. 719) in 2024

1. Response of the Russian Federation in accordance with the Decision of the World Heritage Committee 45 COM 7B.96

Regarding the issue of unconditional revocation of mining, exploration and exploitation licenses issued for the Chudnoye gold deposit, as required by previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

Exploration and mining works are not carried out on the territory of the Yugyd Va National Park.

There is no activity in the area of the Chudnoye deposit, no workers accommodated, no presence of motor vehicles or other special equipment. JSC Zoloto Inty (formerly CJSC Gold Minerals) has removed equipment from the site. The condition of the site is satisfactory.

In 2019, Rosnedra suspended the right to use subsoil under license SYK 14832 BE issued to CJSC Gold Minerals.

Regarding confirmed absence of mining equipment and infrastructure on the territory of the site.

The answer is presented in the previous paragraph.

Regarding the issue of a draft law that will allow changing, in order to carry out such types of economic activities as mining, the boundaries of federal SPNRs, as well as the boundaries of the Yugyd Va National Park.

The boundaries of the site “Virgin Komi Forests” within the boundaries of the Yugyd Va National Park site have not changed. Preservation of the site is guaranteed by the federal law on SPNRs, which is in force on the territory of the national park. Supervision of compliance with the national park regime is entrusted to the Federal State Budgetary Institution “Yugyd Va National Park”. There is no data on the disappearance of fauna and flora species from the territory of the site; no exploration or mining of mineral resources is carried out on the territory of the site.

Regarding the issue of legal protection and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage Sites

The answer is presented in the previous paragraph.

Regarding legal status of the buffer zone of the Pechora-Ilych State Natural Biosphere Reserve.

The boundaries of the site “Virgin Komi Forests”, within the boundaries of “Pechora-Ilych State Natural Biosphere Reserve” (hereinafter also referred to as the Reserve) and its buffer zone, have not changed. Preservation of the site is guaranteed by the federal law on SPNRs, which is in force on the territory of the Reserve and its protective zone. Supervision of compliance with the regime of the Reserve and its protective zone is entrusted to the Federal State Budgetary Institution “Pechora-Ilych State Reserve”.

By Order of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources dated August 9, 2021 No. 547, the buffer zone of the Reserve acquired the status of a protective zone of the Reserve and received separate Regulations. Thus, the status of the buffer zone was upgraded to federal. Currently, the Reserve within the boundaries of the protective zone has received the right to conduct federal state control (supervision) in the field of protection and use of specially protected natural reservations, conduct scientific research, conduct state environmental monitoring, carry out environmental education and develop educational tourism, as well as to implement other functions in accordance with the Regulations and law of the Russian Federation.

In addition to the Reserve, the preservation of the Site within the boundaries of the buffer zone is also controlled by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Komi Republic, the North-Western Territorial Administration of the Federal Agency for Fisheries.

Regarding the development of a Sustainable Tourism Management Strategy.

7 ecological routes have been developed and operate on the territory of the Reserve and its protective zone. The most popular ecological route in the Reserve is the ecological route of Pechora

Source - Manpupuner Plateau. Earlier on, during development of the route, a temporary helipad made of special metal airfield slabs was built and put into operation on the Manpupuner Plateau. This made it possible to reduce the load on the main trail due to helicopter transfers of tourist groups directly to the plateau. In the summer season of 2024, 1,249 people in 77 groups visited the Weathering Pillars in this way.

Currently, on the border of the Reserve there is a mountain camp made of special collapsible modules, which can accommodate 16 persons per night. Dry closets are provided in the mountain camp and near the inspectors' house on the plateau. In the middle of the trail there is a rest area with a fire pit, benches and a toilet.

Since 2017, works have been carried out to install permanent decking and stream crossings along the trail instead of temporary ones. Crossings were built across the Pechora River and several streams with a total length of more than 50 m. In total, 3,232 meters of the trail are currently covered with decking.

To monitor the impact of tourism on tundra ecosystems in the Manpupuner Plateau area, the Reserve conducts monitoring works every two years, which were continued in 2024.

19 tourist routes have been developed and operate on the territory of the Yugyd Va National Park, including in winter. The most popular are hiking routes visiting the Narodnaya and Manaraga mountains and their surroundings, water routes along the Balbanyu and Kozhim, Kosyu, Shchugor and Podcherem rivers. Weekend tours to a guest house in the village of Podcherye, to the Sanavozh base and to the Kozhim River crossing are also very popular. The main types of transportation on the routes: rafting on boats and catamarans, hiking, snowmobile tours. In 2024, the Park was visited by more than 7,000 people.

In order to minimize the anthropogenic impact on the natural complexes of the Park, works on improving existing tourist routes and ecological trails continued in 2024. Works were carried out to maintain guest houses, stopping points and equipped recreation areas - 33, new information boards, signposts and warning signs were installed - 30, works were carried out to provide information content and develop the ecological trails "Walk to Tavrota" and "Walk to Grubependety Lake".

In 2024, 10 volunteer expeditions were conducted in the Park. In total, about 200 people took part in the volunteer campaign this year.

In accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated August 30, 2023 No. 1407 on the Federal State Budgetary Institution "Yugyd Va National Park", works are underway to develop a Recreational Activities Plan for the Yugyd Va National Park for 10 years. The planned approval period for the Plan is 2025. Once the Recreational Activities Plan is approved, a draft Sustainable Tourism Management Strategy will be prepared.

Regarding the issue of ensuring the availability of sufficient financial and human resources for implementation of the Integrated Management Plan for the period of 2017-2031

8 people live in the territory of the Federal State Budgetary Institution "Pechora-Ilych State Reserve" (Reserve employees at the cordons). 15 people live in the territory of the buffer zone.

The security service of the Yugyd Va National Park consists of 23 people. This year, state inspectors of the National Park conducted 97 on-site surveys of the territory of the Yugyd Va National Park to protect natural complexes. The Federal State Budgetary Institution "Yugyd Va National Park" carried out a set of measures in accordance with the State Assignment to ensure the protection of forests from fires in SPNR, as well as preventive measures to prevent forest fires.

As a result of on-site inspections in 2024, 25 violations of environmental law were identified in the Park, 4 tools for illegal use of natural resources were seized, and 1 criminal case was initiated.

There are no settlements on the territory of the Yugyd Va National Park.

In accordance with the National Park Integrated Management Plan, the following activities are being implemented:

- measures to preserve natural complexes in their natural state;
- protection of natural complexes and sites, conservation of biological and landscape diversity;
- environmental and educational activities;
- scientific research and environmental monitoring;
- measures to preserve and restore natural, historical & cultural complexes and sites;
- setting the conditions for regulated tourism and recreation.

The implementation of these activities is carried out at the expense of the federal budget and funds raised from income-generating activities.

2. Information on other current issues related to the conservation of the heritage Site

The Reserve organizes expositions, exhibitions and participates in various projects for organizing exhibitions (republican, all-Russian and international level), which present information about the Reserve and its biodiversity. Every year a large number of printed and souvenir products (booklets, calendars, etc.) are produced. The Reserve positions itself everywhere as a biosphere reserve and the first natural site included in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List in Russia as part of the “Virgin Komi Forests”. Currently, the Reserve’s website <http://www.pechora-reserve.ru> is operational, optimized for different types of user devices. In addition, the Reserve is represented on social networks, where the public is informed about the current life of the Reserve and citizen appeals are handled. The Reserve also regularly appears on television, in print and electronic media. All this helps to significantly improve the image of the Reserve, both at the local and federal levels.

The main problem of protecting the territory of the Reserve was previously the control of the south-eastern part of the Reserve border. It was here that the largest number of violations of the Reserve regime was recorded. As a result of strengthening the protection of the south-eastern part of the Reserve border, the number of violations of the territory protection regime decreased from 94 in 2015 to 7 in 2023.

No facts of illegal hunting, fishing or other violations of the reserve regime associated with property damage were identified.

In 2024, exploration and mining of mineral resources was not carried out in the area of the Reserve and its protective zone.

There were no mass fellings in the immediate vicinity of the boundaries of the Reserve and its protective zone in 2024.

In order to track long-term changes in the state of terrestrial ecosystems in the Reserve, long-term monitoring of 112 parameters is carried out on an ongoing basis.

In 2024, no forest fires were recorded on the territory of the Reserve and its protective zone.

No significant wind phenomena were noted in 2024 on the territory of the Reserve and its protective zone.

Yugyd Va National Park, in order to disseminate information about the Park and popularize the World Heritage, organizes and holds specialized exhibitions and expositions, participates in various projects, conferences at the international, Russian and republican levels, organizes other environmental events (expeditions, workshops, etc.). Every year the Park produces printed and souvenir products with the symbols of the park (flyers, calendars, etc.), shoots and creates videos. In 2023, the documentary film “Queen of the Ural Alps” was awarded the Grand Prix of the X All-Russian festival-competition of tourist video presentations “Wonder of Russia”.

In 2024, the Yugyd Va National Park continued scientific works on the study and conservation of the wild reindeer population in the “Virgin Komi Forests”, as well as works on the study and preservation of historical & cultural heritage.

There were no mass fellings in the immediate vicinity of the Park boundaries in 2024.

In order to track long-term changes in the Park, monitoring works were continued in 2024 in the following areas:

- maintaining long-term series of observations: climatic, phenological;
- monitoring of common species of fauna;
- monitoring of plants;
- forest health monitoring;
- monitoring of tourist flows and regulation of recreational load.

Based on the results of monitoring works, the populations of animals and plants on the territory of the Site are in a stable state, and no large areas of damage or drying out of the forest have been detected. The average recreational load along the park’s tourist routes does not exceed permissible standards.

The Park is also carrying out works on the topic of “Climate change monitoring”, in the context of which research is being carried out on the dynamics of the forest boundary on the western slope of the Subpolar Urals, as well as monitoring the condition of glaciers. In September 2024, an expedition to the Hoffman Glacier was carried out, together with the laboratory of dendrochronology of the Ural Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology. In addition, monitoring of areas where avalanche occurrences are recorded is carried out, with a database maintained and visualized as a layer on the interactive map of the Park.

The institution is provided with fire extinguishing means and fire-fighting equipment. In order to monitor the fire danger in the forests, air patrols of the Park were carried out.

There were no forest fires in the Park in 2024.

No significant wind phenomena were observed in the territory of the national park in 2024.

3. No major changes are noted or predicted within the concerned World Heritage Site.