

## BEAC Nature Protection Subgroup (NPS) report 2012-2013

Chair: Anna Kuhmonen (Finland)

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Other participated experts: Tapio Lindholm, Sune Sohlberg.

The overall goal of the Subgroup on nature protection is to strengthen co-operation and coordination in biodiversity and habitat conservation with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the Barents Region for the future, bearing in mind the aspects of climate change. Establishment of protected areas is an essential tool for conserving biodiversity.

NPS has held four meetings in 2012-2013: 6.-7.2.2012 in Helsinki, Finland, 25.-26.9.2012 in Kajaani, Finland, 10.6 and 13.6.2013 in Bodø, Norway and 4.9.2013 in Hailuoto, Finland.

For the period 2012-2013 a number of activities and projects have been carried out:

- **The 7th International Contact Forum Meeting on Habitat Conservation (HCF VII) in the Barents Region** was held in June 2013 in Bodø, Norway. There were ~50 participants from all of the Barents countries. The HCF consists of administration, science and NGO representatives in the Barents Region. The main themes of the HCF meeting were habitat conservation, wetlands and coastal areas, protection of boreal forests, geodiversity, implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and Barents Protected Areas Network project.
- **Promoting a representative and effectively managed Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN)**

The aim of the BPAN project is to promote and support a representative protected area network for conservation of biodiversity and boreal-arctic nature - especially forests and wetlands. The project is being implemented in all four countries and 13 regions of the Barents Region. Steering Committee and expert working group with thematic subgroups are working to promote and make analysis of the protected area network with involving national and regional authorities and experts using Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas as framework, and using GIS based analysis. Several workshops, seminars, conference and working meetings have been held during the project. More information is available here: [www.bpan.fi](http://www.bpan.fi) and [www.bpan.fi/ru](http://www.bpan.fi/ru).

In the framework of BPAN project following regional projects have been implemented in 2012-2013:

  - Five pilot projects on high conservation value areas, including etc. inventories, developing monitoring, negotiations, communication activities:
    - Planned Dvinsky Forest nature reserve (*zakaznik*), Europe's largest area of old-growth spruce forest situated between the rivers Northern Dvina and Pinega
    - Planned Jonn-Njygojaiv nature reserve (*zakaznik*), old-growth pine forest between Laplandsky strict nature reserve (*zapovednik*) and Laplandskiy Les nature reserve (*zakaznik*) in Russia, and Urho Kekkonen national park in Finland
    - Planned *Zaonezhye nature reserve (zakaznik)*, valuable natural and cultural landscapes of the Zaonezhskye Peninsula
    - Planned Tsilemsky nature reserve (*zakaznik*), the most important habitat of wild reindeer in the Tsilma River basin
    - Monitoring biological diversity in the Nizhnepechorsky nature reserve (*zakaznik*)
  - Preparing a documentary film "On the Trail of the Northern Winds" about protected areas in Komi as a part of the network of protected areas in the Barents Region
  - Organizing a press trip to the Paanajärvi and Oulanka National Parks on 15-18 April 2013.
- **Developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia**

Co-operation on developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia bases on Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2010 between Finland, Russia and Norway. Barents experts have

organized few preparation meetings and the first meetings of the Steering Committee and expert group were held in autumn 2012 in Kotka, Finland. In addition many on-going activities and projects, e.g. related to nature tourism, in the border area are in implementation and they support developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia. Conference on Green Belt of Fennoscandia, official event of Environment Year of the Russian Federation, was organized in 7-11 October, 2013, in Petrozavodsk, Russia. During this week also trilateral Steering Committee and expert group held meetings.

- **Conservation of the last pristine forests in the Barents Region**

Many expeditions to study intact forest landscapes have been organized in the Barents co-operation and in 2012-2013 their results are being evaluated by the experts. Expert group is working further with protection of last intact forest areas and planning the strategy for conservation of the last pristine forests. Seminars on last pristine forests were organized in in December 2012 in St. Petersburg and in November 2013 in Stockholm.

- **Effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Barents Region**

A BEAC project assesses the effect of predicted increases in anthropogenic pressures and land-use changes on future species communities in the Barents Region. Project is implemented by Umeå University and financed by Nordic Council of Ministers.

- **Follow up of the project "GAP analysis in NW Russia" – analysis of the representativeness of the protected area network**

Gap Analysis in Northwest Russia was finalized in 2011. In 2012-2013 Finland has been editing the publication for the usage of the Barents co-operation to be published in English. The results of the Gap Analysis project have been presented in several events. The English Edition was published in September 2013 and is available in printed and electronic forms:

<http://www.syke.fi/en->

[US/Research\\_Development/Ecosystem\\_services\\_and\\_biological\\_diversity/Specialist\\_work/Cooperation\\_for\\_nature\\_conservation\\_in\\_Northwest\\_Russia/Gap\\_analysis\\_of\\_northwest\\_Russia](http://www.syke.fi/en-US/Research_Development/Ecosystem_services_and_biological_diversity/Specialist_work/Cooperation_for_nature_conservation_in_Northwest_Russia/Gap_analysis_of_northwest_Russia)

- Some future projects are in the planning phase, e.g. expedition to More Yu, which is led by Russia in cooperation with Sweden, as continuation of Ecora project and wetland activities.