



**BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL
WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT**
Russian chairmanship 2014-2015

NATURE PROTECTION SUB-GROUP

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Petrozavodsk, Republic of Karelia,
Venue: hotel Park Inn*



Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Working Group of the Environment

Working Plan of the NPS for 2014-2015r.r.

Chair: Tatiana Tyupenko, Republic of Komi, Russia

Members: Anna Kuhmonen (Finland), Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen (Norway), Sune Sohlberg (Sweden), Mats-Rune Bergström (Sweden).

Experts: Alexander Titov (Republic of Karelia, Russia), Tapio Lindholm (Finland), Aimo Saano (Finland),

Overview

The Nature Protection Subgroup (NPS) of the Working Group on Environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council implements and coordinates cooperation in the field of biodiversity and habitat conservation in the Barents region.

Activity of the Subgroup during the Russia's chairmanship in the Working Group on Environment also aims at efforts on implementation to maintain and develop a network of protected areas, biodiversity and protection of valuable habitat in the Barents region.

The Barents region is an important part of the world natural heritage to be protected and sustainably managed. Increase and often irrational use of natural resources such as oil, gas, minerals and forests, water and other resources is a definite threat for remaining wilderness areas. Losses of biodiversity and habitat fragmentation are the biggest threats to the Barents region.

There are significant gaps in the network of protected areas that need to be filled in. Work is required to identify areas, promising to turn into a stable and representative network of protected areas in the Barents region, as well as improving the management of protected areas in all four countries of the Barents alliance.

In the Barents region are concentrated one of the last untouched wilderness areas on the Earth. Last massifs of intact, old-growth forests are also located in Northern Europe, mainly in the Russian part of the Barents region, and require careful attention and action for their conservation.

Climate change, caused by different factors, threatens biodiversity in the Barents region. Further study of this process and all necessary measures for the conservation of biodiversity are needed.

Objective

The overall objective of the Subgroup on Nature Protection, chaired by Russia, is strengthening of multilateral cooperation between regional and federal environmental agencies, the

implementation of joint projects and the wider involvement of the population in the environmental protection of the Barents region.

At the 11th meeting of the environment ministers of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia, held December 4-5 in Inari (Finland), under the Declaration signed by the Ministers were set specific goals:

- Management of protected areas and the need for the establishment of planned protected areas as an important measure to achieve the Aichi objectives in biodiversity.
- To increase cooperation with the Arctic Council, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Emerald Network under the Bern Convention.
- Dissemination of the results of the BPAN project ("Barents Protected Area Network") and implementation of the second phase of this project, which is fully consistent with the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biodiversity
- Development of the strategy for the protection of old-growth intact forests and to continue the cooperation in conservation of wetlands
- Continuation of work within the Habitat Contact Forum in the Barents region and the further implementation of the project Green Belt of Fennoscandia.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to base on existing projects that require further development:

- " Barents Protected Area Network» (BPAN), has completed the first phase. Necessary to continue the work within the second phase of the project
- 8th Habitat Contact Forum in the Barents Region, which will be held in one of the Russian regions in 2015
- Further development of the project «Green Belt of Fennoscandia " with the participation of Russia, Finland and Norway
- Conservation of the last remaining old-growth forest massifs in the Barents Region
- Impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Barents region.

Along with the above mentioned key projects, we welcome the implementation of small bilateral and multilateral projects aimed at improving the protection of nature in the Barents region.

Thank you for attention!