

MISSION REPORT

**Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission
to the Western Caucasus World Heritage Property
Russian Federation
From 17 to 21 May 2010**



Lagonaki Plateau (Credit: EMC2I).

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Each of them contributed greatly to facilitate the work of the Mission and made it able to report on the evolution of the situation since the 2008 Mission.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC	Biathlon Centre
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNRE	Ministry of Natural resources and Environment
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OMV	Olympic Mountain Village
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
SNP	Sochi National Park
TSNR	Teberdinski Strict Nature Reserve
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation
WCNR	Western Caucasus Strict Nature reserve
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Mission was conducted from 17 to 21 May 2010, as requested by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009). The Mission team reviewed the various conservation and management issues addressed by the previous joint Mission carried out in 2008, and assessed progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 mission, which were endorsed by the Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008).

The Mission was able to hold discussions with various stakeholders, including representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), the UNESCO National Commission, the management authority of the Western Caucasus Nature Reserve (WCNR), representatives of the administration of the Adygea Republic which is in charge of the administration of the 3 Nature Monuments and Nature Park included in the property, the Sochi 2014 organising committee, Olympstroy and Gazprom companies which are involved in the construction of the Olympic and tourism facilities, as well as NGO representatives from WWF Russia, Greenpeace and Ecological Watch. The Mission also held discussions with various local stakeholders during a round table discussion.

Following issues were reviewed by the Mission during its visit.

Construction of facilities and infrastructure for the 2014 Olympic Games

The Mission was pleased to note that, as recommended by the 2008 Mission, the Olympic Mountain Village (OMV) and the Biathlon Complex (BC) were relocated to the Psekhako Ridge, and the sliding centre to the Rosa Khuta area, away from the ecologically sensitive Grushevy ridge and upper Mzimta valley where they were originally planned. The Mission concluded that this is minimizing the impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The Mission also reviewed the issue of the access road to the facilities on Psekhako ridge. It was agreed with all stakeholders that this access road should be designated in the future as the boundary of the property until the river crossing, from where the boundary would follow the river bed, upstream, as determined in the official map for nomination of the property. No construction should be allowed near this road. No other construction of access roads to the Olympic facilities and crossing the property is planned and should be built in the future in the vicinity of the property. Traffic on the road should also be strictly regulated during and after the games, to minimize all disturbances in this sensitive area situated outside but very close to the property.

The Mission commends the State Party for having implemented the recommendations of the 2008 Mission so that the impacts of the Olympic and tourism facilities on the property are reduced hopefully. However, the Mission notes that some impacts may remain, in particular on wintering areas and migration routes of large mammals.

Buffer zones and delimitation of the property;

The State Party announced that legal protection status of the Northern buffer zone of the Reserve, which is actually part of the property, has been restored, as recommended by the 2008 mission. The Mission congratulates the State Party for this significant progress and encourages it to mark the limit of the zone clearly in the field.

Efforts are also on-going to establish a buffer zone to the south of the property, as recommended by the 2008 Mission. The Mission was informed that a proposal for a buffer zone with a width from 1 to 5 km was submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which was currently consulting with the different ministries and regional

authorities as foreseen by law. The Mission was told that the proposed buffer zone will be approved in the coming weeks and strongly supports the establishment of this buffer zone in the nearest future.

Work is also on going on the exact definition of the geographical coordinates and legal documentation of the boundaries of the WCNR, and the registration of its territory in the National Land Registry. While the process is completed for most of the Reserve, several court cases are currently on-going over the boundary, in the Adygea Republic, opposing the Federal Government to the Government of the Republic. The State Party expects that the process can be completed by September 2010. The same process also needs to be followed for the 3 regional Nature Monuments and Nature Park. The clarification of the boundary of the property, especially on the North-Western limit, is of particular importance due to the presence of highly sensitive areas like Lagonaki plateau and other areas of ecological importance, and the Mission considers that clarification of the boundaries should be finalised in the nearest future, in order to remove all ambiguities regarding the exact location of this border.

Issues affecting the integrity of the Nature Monuments and northern buffer zone included in the part of the property situated in the Adygea Republic

The 2008 Mission noted a number of developments in the Nature Monuments which are part of the property and situated in the Adygea Republic, which were considered incompatible with World Heritage status. The mission concluded that while some progress was made, most of these issues have not been completely resolved.

The mission is of the opinion that some logging is still on-going, although to a smaller extent than in 2008. The Mission noted that new cabins had been recently constructed at Lunnaya Polyana inside the property, and that also construction is continuing on the Biosphere Centre. The access road to Lunnaya Polyana is still used to access the recreational facilities and some recent improvement works inside the Nature Monuments and very close to the border of the WCNR were observed. The Mission was also informed by NGO representatives of other road constructions which according to the NGOs, are entering the World Heritage property. The mission was unable to verify this situation.

The mission concludes that the integrity of these areas, which are part of the property, continues to be threatened by different developments which are not in accordance with their World Heritage status.

A key issue seems to be the low protection status of the Nature Monuments, which allows certain developments which are not in line with their World Heritage status. In addition, as these Monuments are managed by the Government of the Adygea Republic and the Federal authorities have difficulties in enforcing stricter conservation measures.

Development of tourism

The mission reviewed the question of tourism activities in Lagonaki, Mt. Fisht and Mt Oshten areas and was informed while current tourism activities are limited to backpacking along established routes, the Adygea Republic continues to develop plans for ski facilities in this area. After the mission and at the time of preparation of this report, the mission team also received information about a new initiative to build several ski resorts in the Caucasus mountains, which would include the Lagonaki area.

The Mission reiterates that the development of ski and other mass tourism facilities is not consistent with the World Heritage Status of this highly sensitive area and therefore plans for these facilities should be abandoned definitely, in line with the recommendations of the 2008 Mission.

The Mission considers that there is an urgent need for building a clear and understandable vision on tourism for the whole area, including the Mzimta valley, and developing appropriate

action plan and capacity building programme on tourism, with regards to the limited carrying capacity of this area and its high sensitivity, as recommended by the World Heritage Committee since 2004.

Preparation of an overall management plan

An overall management plan approved by the MNRE was submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre as requested by the Committee at its 28th session and reviewed by the Mission. This plan addresses the most important issues related to the property, and sets some clear objectives and expected results. The Mission recommends that in order to facilitate its implementation, more detailed operational plans now be developed together with the establishment of an overall coordination body, in which all services, at federal and regional levels, in charge of managing the property are represented, as well as representatives of the civil society.

Development of a corridor to Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve, extension of Sochi National Park and reintroduction of the Persian Leopard to the property

The State Party announced to the Mission that early May, a decree was signed by the Prime Minister to establish an ecological polygon, creating a strictly protected corridor linking the property with Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve (TSNR), thus creating a continuous strict protected area over a length of 200 km in the Caucasus mountains. The State Party also informed the Mission on the on-going reintroduction programme for the Persian Leopard into the Caucasian Mountains.

The Mission welcomes these important developments and notes that the creation of a large protected area cluster is necessary to guarantee the success of the leopard reintroduction project and to obtain a minimum viable population of leopards in the long term. The Mission encourages the State Party to continue on developing this project and strengthening a scientific baseline for it, with the support of IUCN and other external specialists.

The Mission concludes that the State Party has made noteworthy advancements in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 Mission. However, while the integrity of WCNR is considered good, the Mission remains very concerned about the integrity of the Nature Monuments and Nature Park, as well as the Northern buffer zone and Lagonaki plateau which are part of the property, and stresses the need for an urgent and full implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 Mission on those issues.

The Mission team makes the following recommendations to the State Party :

1. Immediately halt all infrastructure developments which are affecting the integrity of the property , in particular in the River Tsitsa headwaters, headwaters of Rivers Pshekha and Pshekhashka and Buiniy Ridge Nature Monuments, Bolshoy Tkhach Nature Park and northern buffer zone situated in the Adygea Republic. This concerns more specifically tourism and road infrastructure, in particular:
 - a. halting all further works on the road to Lunnaya Polyana and ensuring that traffic is strictly regulated and will not affect the integrity of the property
 - b. ensuring that the “Biosphere Centre” is used for management and research and monitoring or visitor purposes only and not converted into a recreational facility
 - c. checking whether new roads and facilities constructed close to Lunnaya Polyana and at the bottom of the Lagonaki plateau are located in the property and if so, take immediate action to stop these works;
2. Abandon any plans for recreational use and development of the Lagonaki plateau, Mt Fisht and Mt Oshten areas. In this respect, the State party should the Committee with all detailed appropriate information and data on the project on tourism in Caucasus, presented at the last economic forum, in St Petersburg, late June and on its expected

impacts on the property as well as on the new created ecological corridor linking TSNR and the property.

3. Stop logging activities, including so-called sanitary cutting, in particular in the Nature Monuments, Nature Park and northern buffer zone situated in the Adygea Republic, rehabilitate the logged areas and monitor their recovery;
4. Finalise urgently the exact definition of the geographic coordinates and legal documentation of the boundary of the property and the establishment of a buffer zone on its southern boundary and submit an updated map of the property to the World Heritage Centre;
5. Establish a coordination body for the entire property, to ensure the implementation of the overall management plan, and develop and implement resourced operational plans for its effective implementation;
6. Establish a comprehensive programme to monitor the impacts of all Olympic facilities and tourism facilities on wildlife population trends and movements around the property and ensure continued cooperation and consultation between the Sochi 2014 organising committee and the Reserve authorities;
7. Upgrade the protection regime of the Natural Monuments and Nature Park, either by including them in the Strict Nature Reserve, or by ensuring that all development activities in contradiction to their World Heritage status are prohibited;
8. Develop and implement an overall sustainable tourism strategy and comprehensive plan for the property and adjacent protected areas, privileging low impact tourism activities which can be developed without affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;
9. Complete the designation of a strictly protected corridor which will link the property to the Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve as soon as possible, and to consider submitting a proposal for the extension of the property to include both these areas. This extension will be considered a major extension under the *Operational Guidelines*;
10. Consider addressing the issue of overall management plans, management frameworks and management standards for all natural World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation composed of federal and regional protected areas through a national law for the management of natural World Heritage properties that meets the State Party's obligations to the Convention;
11. Strengthen the scientific baseline of the leopard reintroduction project in cooperation with IUCN and external experts and provide the World Heritage Committee with a clear detailed scientific concept of this project in line with the international standards, such as those developed by IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC), and requirements for reintroduction of species.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

The Western Caucasus was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998 under natural criteria (ii), and (iv), currently criteria (ix) and (x).

This property includes the Western Caucasus Strict Nature Reserve (WCNR) and its buffer zone (286 335 ha), the Bolshoy Thach Nature Park (3 700 ha), the Ridge Buijnij (1 480 ha), the River Tsitsa headwaters (1 913 ha), as well as the Headwaters of Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha (5 776 ha) Nature Monuments.

Further details on the territory and on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property can be found in the 2008 Mission report.

The World Heritage Committee at several occasions expressed concerns to the State Party over management issues at the Property since 2001:

- at its 25th session, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee expressed concerns over management problems and threats to its integrity ;
- at its 28 session (Suzhou, 2004), the World Heritage Committee invited the State Party to provide information on the integrity concerns, including reported illegal trespassing, weakening of conservation controls, impacts of proposed tourism infrastructure development, potential changes in the boundaries of the property and construction of a road. The Committee also encouraged the State Party to prepare and implement a management plan for the property that includes a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourist development (Dec. 28 COM 14B.16) ;
- at its 31 session (Christchurch 2007), the World Heritage Committee decided to postpone the discussion on the property because of the imminent decision on the 2014 Winter Games but welcomed the invitation for a monitoring mission. It also requested again the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre (WHC) with a copy of the management plan of the property (Dec 31 COM 7B.32) ;

A reactive monitoring mission was undertaken from 18 to 25 April 2008 which concluded that the Outstanding Universal Value was not considered to be in danger, but noted some serious threats to the integrity of the site, mainly because of planned developments of infrastructure for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games, as well as tourism infrastructure and road developments. The mission made a number of urgent recommendations to address these threats, namely:

- halt further construction of the road to Lunnaya Polyana, and ensure it is not enlarged, asphalted and used for recreational use, and the traffic is strictly regulated ;
- restore the legal protection for the buffer zone of the property and ensure that it is managed fully in accordance with its World Heritage status ;
- stop illegal logging of forests, rehabilitate the logged areas and monitor their ecological recovery ;
- abandon plans for recreational use and development in Lagonaki Plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas, and ensuring that the use of infrastructure and equipment already existing on site is strictly limited ;
- ensure that the Biosphere Centre built at Lunnaya Polyana is used for management, research and monitoring, or visitor information purposes only, and not converted into a recreational facility ;
- prevent construction of facilities and infrastructure related to the 2014 Winter Olympics within or in the proximity of the World Heritage property, especially in very sensitive areas like Grushevy ridge ;

- identify alternative locations to the proposed locations of the Olympic Mountain Village, the Sliding Center and the Biathlon stadium, as well as associated roads and infrastructure, located in the adjoining SNP and in the immediate proximity of the Southern boundary of the property. Suitable international biodiversity experts should be involved with this process to enhance transparency and credibility ;
- subject all construction projects of the 2014 Winter Olympics facilities and infrastructure to a full and independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure which explicitly assesses the likely impacts of projects on the outstanding universal value and integrity of the property, as well as on the SNP.

The mission also proposed a number of additional recommendations to further strengthen the protection and management of the property. The full mission report can be downloaded at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/900/documents/>.

Based on the results of the mission, the World Heritage Committee at its 32 session (Quebec City, 2008) urged the State Party to halt all activities affecting the values and integrity of the property, in particular, the extensive risks to the property from the plans for the developments for 2014 Winter Olympic Games, and road plans and implement all the recommendations of the 2008 Mission as a matter of urgency (Dec. 32 COM 7B.25) ;

At its 33 session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee noted with satisfaction the assurance given by the State Party in its annual report on the State of Conservation of the property, that no development within the property or the buffer zone would take place, but regretted that no maps were provided indicating the location of the installations for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games and other infrastructure developments in the property and the adjacent SNP. The Committee further requested the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission to carry out a timely assessment of progress in implementing the above mentioned recommendations before the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2010 (Annex 2).

The requested mission was organized from 17 to 21 June 2010. The mission team was composed of Guy Debonnet of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Hervé Lethier, representing IUCN. The terms of reference and agenda of the mission can be found in annexes 1 and 2. The mission was able to consult with a range of stakeholders, including representatives of the Sochi 2014 organizing committee, Olympstroy, Gazprom, the Adygea Republic as well as NGO representatives. The mission was able to conduct visits on the ground and to fly over the Property by helicopter, in order to overview the situation, to assess the state of conservation of the Property and to review the state of implementation of each recommendation.

2. INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The protected areas of the Property are governed by the national protected area legislation, in particular the federal law “On environmental protection” dating back to 1991 but updated in 2002 and federal law “On specially protected natural areas” of 1995. The first law defines standards for environmental quality, makes provisions for the protection of biota and provides a basis for federal protected areas and activities permitted in them. The protected area law regulates the organization, protection and use of protected areas. This legislation recognizes different types of protected areas such as at the federal level strict nature reserves, national parks and nature monuments and at the regional level nature parks, nature reserves and nature monuments.

Western Caucasus World Heritage site is a serial property and therefore composed of 5 different protected areas. The major part of the property is WCNR, a federal protected area with the status of a Strict Nature Reserve (“Zapovednik”), corresponding to IUCN protected area category I and enjoying a high protection status where no economic uses are allowed. The 4 other components have a regional protected area status : Bolshoy Thach Nature Park¹, Ridge Buijnij Nature Monument², River Tsitsa headwaters Nature Monument³ and Headwaters of Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha⁴ Nature Monument. These regional protected areas have a much weaker protection status, equivalent to IUCN category IV (nature parks) or III (nature monuments). Certain uses, such as recreational use, can be allowed by the regional administrations they are managed by. The property also includes the buffer zone to the WCNR, created by the Adygea Republic⁵. The 1995 federal law gave the authority to create - and therefore also to abolish - buffer zones to federal Strict Nature Reserves to the regional authorities. However this provision was changed in 2004, which returned this authority to the Federal Government.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

The main objective of the current mission was to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 mission in order to address issues it had identified.

3.1 Construction of facilities and infrastructure for the 2014 Olympic Games

Originally, the Olympic Mountain Village (OMV) and the sliding venue were planned to be located in the upper valley of the Mzimta, on the left bank of the river, in an ecologically very sensitive area of importance for wildlife during winter time and very close to the boundary of the property, while at the same time far away from the other Olympic venues. Several access roads were also planned to be built to reach those venues (access roads 5.1 and 5.2)⁶.

The 2008 Mission strongly recommended that those venues and associated roads and infrastructures be removed further from the boundary of the property, to minimize their impacts on its integrity and that all Olympic facilities in general be located in ecologically less sensitive areas.

At the time of the 2008 Mission, the location of the biathlon complex (BC) was not clearly decided but the Mission team was told that this venue could also be located in an ecologically sensitive area somewhere in the Mzimta valley. Due to lack of detailed information on this location, the 2008 Mission was not able to assess this issue.

During its visit, the Mission team was told that the OMV and the BC were finally relocated away from the ecologically sensitive Grushevy ridge and upper Mzimta valley. The BC and part of the OMV⁷ are now located on Psekhako Ridge (Map 1).

The Mission visited those new locations and observed that they are situated in the Gazprom concession, at least one kilometre away from the boundary of the property and concluded that those locations are minimizing the impacts of those Olympic facilities on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

¹ Established by Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 244, 08 October 1997.

² Established by Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 467, 09 December 1996.

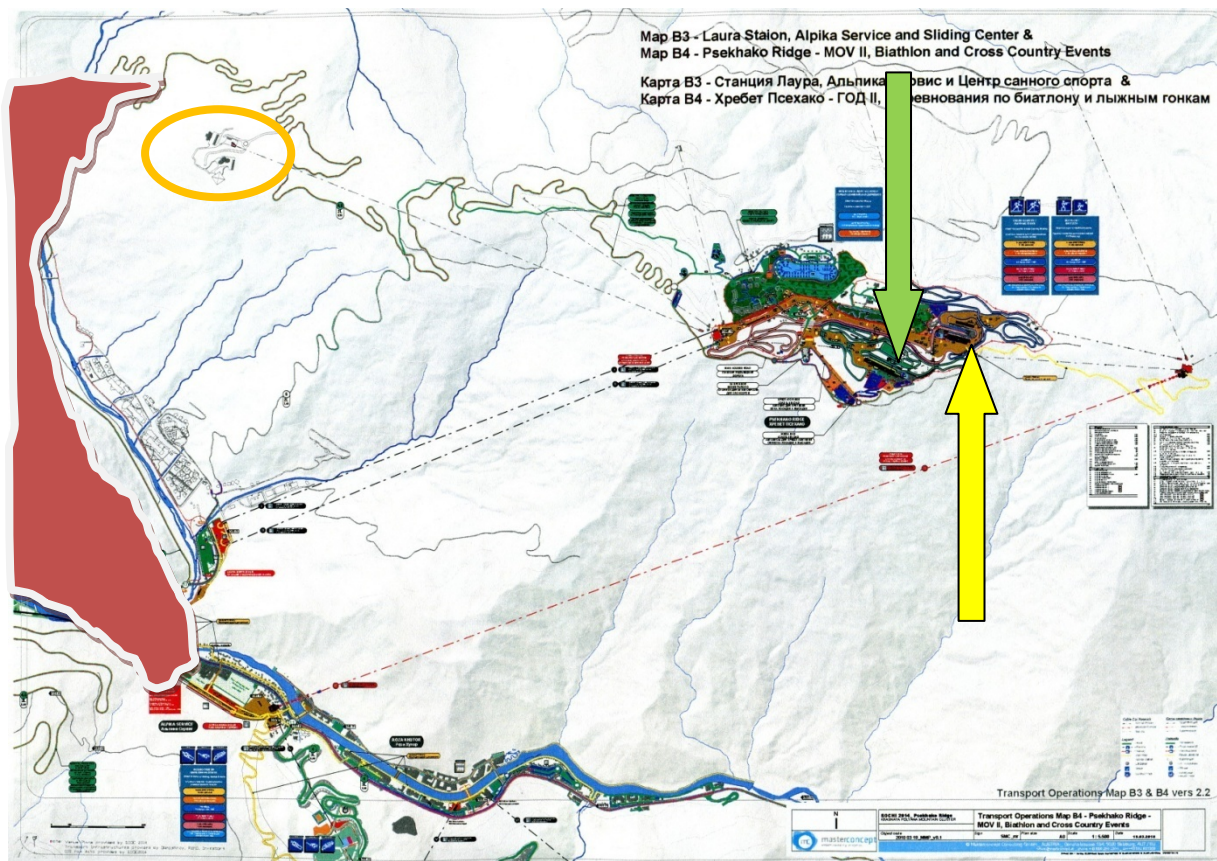
³ Established by Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 274, 23 December 1997.

⁴ Established by Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 274, 23 December 1997.

⁵ Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 322, 26 July 1996.

⁶ Cf. 2008 Mission report, Map 1, p 12.

⁷ Originally the entire OMV was to be located on Grushevy ridge. Now only a smaller OMV is foreseen in Psekhako Ridge, which will host participants in the biathlon while a second much larger OMV will be constructed at Rosa Khuta, hosting participants to the ski and bobsleigh complexes.



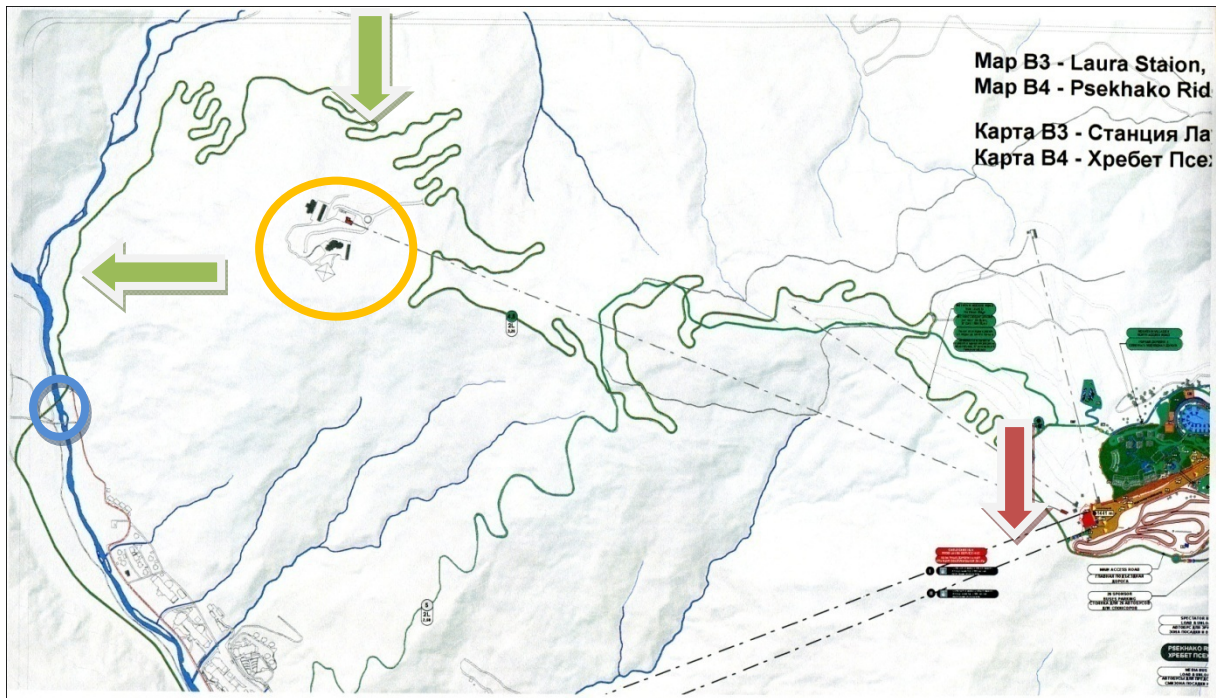
Map 1: overview of the Psekhako complex where the OMV and the BC were relocated (Source : Gazprom).

WCNR.
 OMV
 BC
 VIP complex

As far as the sliding centre is concerned, this venue was relocated in Rosa Khuta, close to the Olympic alpine ski venues, downstream the valley of the Mzimta river, on its left bank, in an area much further away from the border of the property, with no direct impact on it.

Other facilities in the Gazprom concession, such as ski slopes and the VIP complex appear to be located at more than one kilometre from the boundary of the property (Map 1). The mission considers that this location is minimizing the indirect impacts on the property ***and stresses the importance that any additional facilities in this location respect this minimum distance of at least 1 km from the boundary of the property.***

The Mission also reviewed the issue of the access road to the facilities on Psekhako ridge. This road is following the right bank of the Achipse river, which, according to the map in the nomination file, is the boundary of the property, for approximately 100 meters, before crossing the river, following its left bank in the envisaged buffer zone before moving away from the boundary, to the ridge.



Map 2 : (Source : Gazprom): location of the bridge , the access road , the new cable car  and the VIP complex 

The 2008 Mission was very much concerned by this access road⁸, as the original plans foresaw the construction of a wide tarmac access road close following the Achipse river and boundary of the property. It was explained to the mission team that plans for a large tarmac access road had been abandoned and that visitor access to the facilities on the Psekhako complex was foreseen by cable cars. The mission team accessed the ridge by a new cable car and construction of a second cable car is also foreseen. Both cable cars are sufficiently far from the boundary. The foreseen road will therefore function as a service road, and not be tarred or widened. The road will also not follow the river until the boundary of the Gazprom concession but move away from the river early to follow a more direct access to the Psekhako ridge.

It was agreed with all stakeholders, including representatives from the MNRE, MFA, WCNR, Gazprom and NGOs, that this access road (Picture 1) should be designated in the future as the boundary of the property until the river crossing, from where the boundary would follow the river bed, upstream, as determined in the official map for nomination of the property. No constructions should be allowed near this road. No other construction of access roads to the Olympic facilities and crossing the property is planned and should be built in the future. It was also agreed that the entrance of the WCNR should be clearly delimited at the beginning of the old gravel road where small WCNR facilities are installed, under the authority of the manager of the reserve.

The Mission reiterates the recommendation of the 2008 Mission to locate it as far as possible from the border of the property, so that it goes the most directly to the Psekhako complex ; the traffic on it should also be strictly regulated during and after the games, to minimize all disturbance in this sensitive area situated outside but very close to the property. No other access road should be built in the future, upstream, on the left bank of the river.

⁸ Cf. : 2008 Mission Report, p 15 (Map 2, access road n°5.5).



Picture 1 – Location of the new Gazprom road to be designated as the WCNR border in the future, up to the bridge (the present bridge will be removed and replaced by a definitive one to be built downstream the river).

The Mission commends the State Party for having implemented the recommendations of the 2008 Mission so that the impacts of the Olympic facilities on the property are reduced significantly.

However, the Mission notes that some impacts remain, in particular on wintering areas and migration routes of large mammals which are an important element of the OUV of the property. Those impacts on the natural heritage should be monitored so that the synergetic effects of all Olympic and tourism activities and facilities are monitored adequately, as recommended by the UNEP 2nd expert mission, which was undertaken in January 2010.

The Mission strongly recommends the establishment of a comprehensive global monitoring programme which would monitor all direct and indirect impacts of all new Olympic and tourism facilities on wildlife trends and movements in and around the property, as well as in Sochi National Park (SNP). This monitoring programme should facilitate in the future appropriate decisions to be taken for minimizing and compensating the negative impacts on wildlife, of all activities and infrastructures in the whole Mzimta valley area.

The Mission also recommends that the State Party be invited to ensure continued cooperation and consultation between the Sochi 2014 organising committee and the Reserve authorities, as suggested also by the UNEP 2nd expert mission; the Sochi 2014 Environmental Strategy and Action Plan should directly contribute in developing this monitoring programme and in implementing all measures needed for mitigating and compensating the negative environmental impacts of the Olympic games on the property.

3.2 Buffer zones and delimitation of the property

The 2008 mission expressed concern on attempts by the Republic of Adygea to remove legal protection of the northern buffer zone which is included in the property in order to develop tourism facilities. The State Party clarified that while the buffer zone was created in 1996 by the Adygea authorities, the changes in the legislation on protected areas gave this authority to the Federal Government (see also chapter 2). Therefore the northern buffer is now under the authority of the Federal Government, and has the same protection status as WCNR.

As a result, in spite of the fact that some court cases are still open on this issue, the legal protection status of the northern buffer zone of WCNR has been restored, as recommended by the 2008 Mission.

The Mission congratulates the State Party for this significant progress.

For the record and prior to the establishment of SNP, a buffer zone existed also along the Southern border of the property, but this zone was removed when the park was set up, for legal national reasons. The 2008 Mission strongly supported the re-establishment of this buffer zone, in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines of the Convention*, paragraph 103, in order to improve the protection of the property.

The Mission was informed that efforts are on-going to establish a buffer zone to the south of the property. A technical proposal for a buffer zone, with a width from 1 to 5 km, was prepared by the authorities of WCNR and submitted to MNRE, which is currently consulting with the different ministries and regional authorities as foreseen by law. Its final approval was expected in the coming weeks.

The Mission strongly supports the establishment of this buffer zone in the nearest future.

The mission was also informed about the status of the work to complete the exact definition of the geographic coordinates and legal documentation of the boundaries of WCNR, and the registration of its territory in the National Land Registry. The 2008 mission was informed that this process would have been completed before the end of 2008⁹.

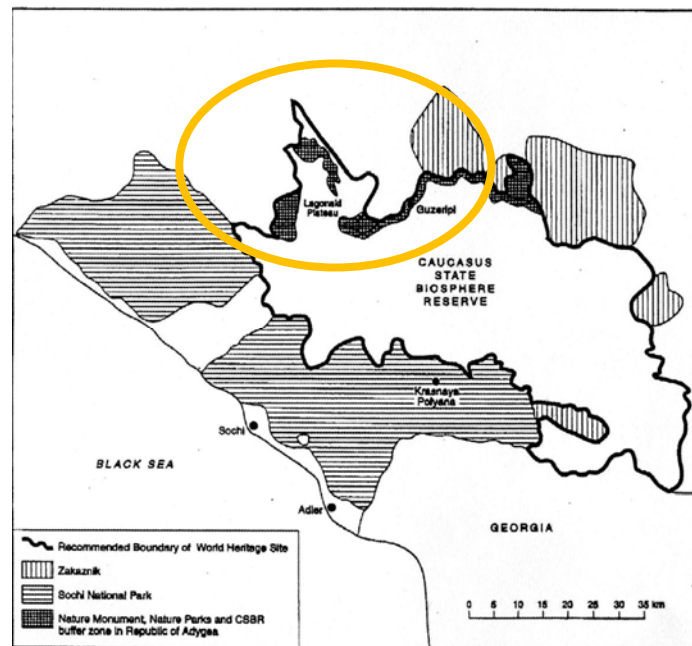
However, while the process is completed for most of the Reserve, several court cases are currently on-going over the boundary, in the Adygea Republic, opposing the Federal Government to the Government of the Republic. The State Party expects that the process can be completed by September 2010.

The same process also needs to be followed for the 3 regional Nature Monuments and Nature Park, as well as for the extreme north-western part of WCNR where the situation of the borders of the property is also ambiguous (Map 3).

The legal documentation of the boundary of the property, especially on the north-western limit, is of particular importance due to the presence of highly sensitive areas, like Lagonaki plateau and other areas of ecological importance.

The Mission considers that this work should be finalised in the near future, in order to remove all remaining ambiguities regarding the exact location of this boundary and recommends strongly that a clear field demarcation of the property be completed, as soon as this legal documentation is finalised.

⁹ Cf. 2008 Mission report, § 5.1.1, p 10.



Map 3 : delimitation of the property (Source : nomination file).

○ North-Western part of the Property mentioned here above where the border should be clarified.

3.3 Issues affecting the integrity of the Nature Monuments and northern buffer zone included in the part of the property situated in the Adygea Republic

The 2008 Mission noted a number of developments in the Nature Monuments which are part of the property and situated in the Adygea Republic, which were considered incompatible with the World Heritage status.

These included illegal logging, construction of roads and recreational facilities.

3.3.1 Illegal logging

The State Party reported to the Mission that all illegal logging was stopped since November 2008 and that only sanitary cutting was taking place in the Nature Monuments, in accordance with the forest legislation.

However, the Mission overflew the area and, while it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between recent and old logging from the air, it was of the opinion that some logging is still on-going, although to a smaller extent than in 2008. The Mission team observed the existence of small secondary roads in the forest, associated to logging activities, which seemed to have been constructed since the 2008 Mission.

The Mission considers that the observed logging cannot be considered as sanitary cutting. According to the existing forest regulations¹⁰, both select and clear sanitary felling in state nature reserves, nature parks and nature monuments is allowed only as an exception, in case of the appearance of dangerous pests or diseases. However it is the regional forest authorities which can approve these sanitary cutting operations¹¹. However, it seems unlikely that these sanitary cuttings could be justified on the basis of the occurrence of pest and

¹⁰ Sanitary Regulations of Forests of the Russian Federation – Order 1458 of the Federal Forest Service n° 214 of 24 December 1998.

¹¹ NGO representatives showed the mission team that these approvals were indeed delivered by the regional forest authorities.

diseases. The mission was therefore under the strong impression that the provisions for sanitary cutting are used as a loophole to continue limited logging activities in the regional components of the property.

The Mission clearly considers the on-going logging incompatible with the maintenance of the integrity of the property and strongly recommends the State Party be invited to take all appropriate measures to stop all logging and associated activities and infrastructures, including sanitary cutting, on the whole territory of the property.

This could be done through provisions in the management plan or through the “passport”¹² of the natural monument.

3.3.2 Recreational facilities

The 2008 mission expressed concern about the construction of different recreational facilities such as “Biosphere Center”.

During the field visit, the Mission noted that new cabins had been recently constructed at Lunnaya Polyana inside the property, and also that construction is continuing on the Biosphere Centre. The Mission received reports that these cabins would have been built by the forest service but host tourists and that the Centre continues to be used for recreational use, contrary to the recommendation of the 2008 Mission.

The Mission notes that while these developments might not be contrary to the national protection status of the Nature Monuments, the unplanned development of recreational facilities is not in accordance with World Heritage Status.

3.3.3 Road construction and power line construction

According to the State Party, works on the access road to Lunnaya Polyana were stopped after the 2008 Mission and the road was used by the forest department only. However the Mission noted that the road is used to access the recreational facilities at Lunnaya Polyana. It observed that some recent improvement works were conducted, inside the Nature Monuments and very close to the border of WCNR (Picture 3).

The Mission was also informed by NGO representatives of other road constructions which are on-going around the Lagonaki plateau with funding from the Federal Government¹³ and which according to the NGOs, are entering the property, more precisely the Northern buffer zone, which is part of it. This concerns the tarmac roads Dakhovskaya village/Lagonaki plateau and Guzeripl settlement/Lagonaki plateau. According to the State Party, road works were stopped at the point where the road enters the property. A power line is reportedly also under construction along the road. The Mission overflow part of the Guzeriple road but was unable to evaluate if the road entered the property. In any case, the construction of a tarmac road is a significant investment, and does not seem justified to improve access only to the small settlements close to the Reserve.

The Mission was not able to assess if those roads and power line are built inside or outside the property, in the absence of clear delimitation of the property but reiterates that these developments are incompatible with World Heritages status.

¹² The Law on Specially Protected Areas foresees for Natural Monuments a “passport” which specifies which uses can be allowed in specific monuments in accordance with their protection objectives.

¹³ Federal target programme South of Russia 2008-2012



Picture 2 – Vodopadistiy ; recreational area located at the North Western border of the WCNR (Source : Mission)



Picture 3 : Lunnaya Polyana “forest road” (Source : Mission).

3.3.4 Legal status of the Nature Monuments

The mission remains very concerned about the different uncontrolled developments in the Nature Monuments situated in the Adygea Republic and stress the need to address these issues urgently.

A key issue seems to be the low protection status of the Nature Monuments, which allows certain developments that are not in line with their World Heritage status. In addition, as regional protected areas, these Monuments are managed by the Government of the Adygea Republic and the Federal authorities have difficulties in enforcing stricter conservation measures.

The Mission recommends that the State Party considers upgrading the protected status of these areas, by including them in WCNR, which already covers more than 95 % of the property, giving them the same strict protection status. Alternatively, clear restrictions on the use of natural resources in these areas should be included in the management plan of the property and endorsed by the regional management authorities of the Adygea Republic, to ensure that no resource use is permitted which is contrary to their World Heritage status.

The mission notes that similar issues are also found in other natural World Heritage sites in the Russian Federation, which are serial properties and include areas with the status of regional protected areas. This is for example the case for Volcanoes of Kamchatka World Heritage site, Lake Baikal World Heritage site, Golden Mountains of Altai World Heritage site and Virgin Komi Forest World Heritage site. The limited authority of the Federal Government over these areas can be an important challenge for the State Party to ensure its commitments under the Convention. In addition, not only have these areas in many cases a weak protection status, allowing certain resource uses that are incompatible with their World

Heritage status, but decisional power over the various resources (forest, wildlife, fish) is often split between various federal and regional authorities, making a coherent conservation approach for these areas challenging¹⁴.

The mission therefore wants to reiterate the Decision of the World Heritage Committee at its 32 session (32 COM 7B.23) which invited the State Party to consider addressing the issue of joint management plans, management frameworks and management standards for all natural World Heritage properties in Russia composed of federal and regional protected areas, through a national law for the management of natural World Heritage properties that meets the State Party's obligations to the Convention.

This would set the legal framework for federal authorities to oversee the management of protected areas included in World Heritage properties, whether under federal or regional jurisdiction, and set standards for their management and protection that meet the *Operational Guidelines* and conserve the various sites' OUV. The mission notes that similar legislation has been enacted in other State Parties to the Convention.

3.4 Development of tourism

The 2008 mission was told that certain ski facilities that were planned being developed in the Gazprom concession on Psekhako Ridge were situated in the Property. The current Mission during its field visit to the Gazprom concession observed that, as promised by MNRE in 2008, signs and publicities promoting the development of ski and other tourism facilities in the Property in 2008 (Picture 4) were removed by the company (Picture 5).

The mission considers that the facilities as currently planned on the map minimize their impact on the property.



Picture 4 – Information panel (2008)
Gazprom complex (Source : 2008 Mission).

Picture 5 – Information panel (2010)
Gazprom complex (Source : 2010 Mission).

The Mission also discussed the issue of tourism developments at Lagonaki plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt Oshten. The State Party confirmed to the Mission team that tourism activities in Lagonaki area are limited to backpacking along established routes, but that the Adygea Republic continues to develop plans for ski facilities in this area and wishes to develop them in the future.

So far, these plans have not been approved, as they are situated on WCNR and its buffer zone. The on-going court cases on the delimitation of the boundary of WCNR seem related to the same issue and the heavy investment in tarmac access roads to the area observed by the Mission during its visit could also be explained by these plans for developing ski facilities (Picture 6).

¹⁴This problem is well documented in the Volcanoes of Kamchatka World Heritage property/Mission report 2007, which can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/765/documents/>



Picture 6 : tarmac access road up to the foot of the Lagonaki plateau (Source : Mission).

At the time of the preparation of this report, the mission team also received information about a new initiative to build several ski resorts in the Caucasus mountains, which was presented in the margins of the 14th St Petersburg International Economic Forum, the main annual economic summit of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States which was held 17 – 19 June. According to information available from press reports, this initiative which has received support from the President of the Russian Federation, plans to build a chain of five ski resorts and this includes a 800 km² ski resort on Lagonaki, with 165 km of ski slopes and 30 ski lifts, inside the World Heritage property. The mission notes that if this development is approved, it would constitute an important threat to the OUV of the property. The proposed development will also affect Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve (TSNR) and the new created corridor created between TSNR and the property (see 3.7). This project was not mentioned to the mission during its visit.

The Mission is very concerned by these programmes and proposals and reiterates that the development of ski and other mass tourism facilities is not consistent with the World Heritage Status of the property. If approved, these developments would constitute an important threat to the OUV of the property. Thus, any plans for these winter sport facilities in Lagonaki or other parts of the property should be immediately abandoned. It recalls decision 32 COM 7B.25 of the World Heritage Committee which urged the State party to abandon plans for recreational use and development in Lagonaki Plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas.

The Mission also notes that many projects are currently ongoing to develop different kinds of tourism activities in the Caucasus area, without visible global coherence. The Mission

considers that there is an urgent need for building a clear and understandable vision on tourism for the whole area of the property, including the Mzimba valley, and developing appropriate action plan and capacity building programme on tourism, with regards to the limited carrying capacity of this area and its high sensitivity.

At its 28 session in 2004, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourist development (Dec. 28 COM 14B.16) and this was reiterated by the 2008 mission. However, it has not been implemented to date. This measure may be facilitated through cooperation between, Sochi 2014, the State party and UNEP which hosts the “*Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism*”, which addresses directly, amongst other issues, tourism policy frameworks, protection of environment and biodiversity, as well as cultural and natural heritage preservation.

The Mission considers that certain low impact tourism activities (wildlife viewing tourism, summer hiking, organized riding, day trip, ...) traditionally considered as ecological tourism, could be developed in parts of the property, such as the nature parks and monuments, without affecting significantly the OUV of the property, and respect its integrity, but that a clear vision and a overall sustainable tourism strategy for the property and adjacent protected areas should be developed in consultation all stakeholders, as recommended by the 2008 Mission and required by the World Heritage Committee since 2004. This strategy should promote high standards tourism facilities and activities, optimizing the natural heritage and respecting fully the value and integrity of the property and adjacent protected areas.

3.5 Preparation of an overall management plan

According to the *Operational Guidelines*, World Heritage properties should have appropriate management plan or other documented management system to ensure the protection of the property. The elaboration of this plan has been requested by the World Heritage Committee since the inscription of the site on the World Heritage list and the need to produce this plan for the whole property was reiterated by the 2008 Mission.

An overall management plan for the entire Western Caucasus World Heritage site was prepared in 2009 and approved by MNRE late 2009. An English translation was submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre prior to the mission.

The Mission reviewed this plan which addresses the most important management issues related to the property, and sets some clear objectives and expected results. Amongst other issues, this plan shows substantial discrepancies between the delimitation of the property as appearing in the nomination file and the boundaries designed in this document. As said before, the clear delimitation of the property remains a crucial issue to solve in the nearest future, in accordance with the nomination file.

Another key issue is the implementation of this plan. This plan should be implemented as well by all agencies responsible for the management of the various components of the property, at both federal and regional levels. Paragraph 4.3 of this document stipulates that a “management body” must be established for the whole property ; it would be in charge of coordinating the management activities between all entities concerned and promote building of a management system, on the basis of which the management activities that has to be further designed, be performed.

The Mission considers that the development of an overall management plan constitutes a real progress and recommends that in order to facilitate its implementation, more detailed operational plans now be developed, specifying the operational activities to achieve the set general and specific objectives, as well as timeframes, budgets and responsibilities.

Furthermore, the Mission considers that the establishment of an overall coordination body, in which all services in charge of managing the property are represented, at federal and regional levels, as well as representatives of the civil society, is a key element to implement the plan successfully.

The State Party agreed with the need to set up this body and announced that it would be officially established by MNRE in the near future. A roadmap of detailed activities should be elaborated for this body, as soon as it is established, so that the property is managed in line with the World Heritage obligations.

3.6 Construction of roadways or railways

The Mission received no new information about any recent development of infrastructures inside the property, other than those mentioned here above related to logging and tourism development, in the north of the property.

Substantial environmental impacts were noted by the Mission along the lower Mzimta valley, from Sochi to Krasnaya Polyana, linked to the on-going construction of road and railways for accessing to the Olympic facilities.

These environmental issues were addressed by UNEP¹⁵ and NGOs. The Mission considers that those works do not have immediate direct danger for the property, but that indirect significant effects may be expected on the property, in the mid and long terms, especially on large mammal migrations and demography.

As recommended under 3.1, the mission recommends the establishment of a global monitoring programme, which would allow regular monitoring on the impacts of those infrastructure works on the larger ecosystem and facilitate the definition and implementation of mitigation measures in order to minimize those impacts, especially on the natural processes, as well as compensatory appropriate measures.

The Mission recommends that this monitoring programme be established in the nearest future, and built on the basis of the highest international standards. The State party should ensure that all technical, financial and institutional requirements are in place to implement the measures needed to mitigate and compensate the effects of those infrastructure works, including their indirect long term impacts on the value of the Property. The Sochi 2014 organizing committee should integrate this in its environmental strategy and action plan and report regularly to WHC.

¹⁵ Sochi 2014 report of the UNEP 2nd Expert Mission, 28-30 January 2010.

3.7 Development of a corridor to Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve, extension of Sochi National Park and reintroduction of the Persian Leopard to the property

The State Party announced to the Mission that a decree was signed by the Prime Minister on 4 May 2010 (N 667-p), to establish an ecological polygon, creating a strictly protected corridor linking the property with TSNR. This polygon will create a continuous strict protected area over a length of 200 km in the Caucasus Mountains.

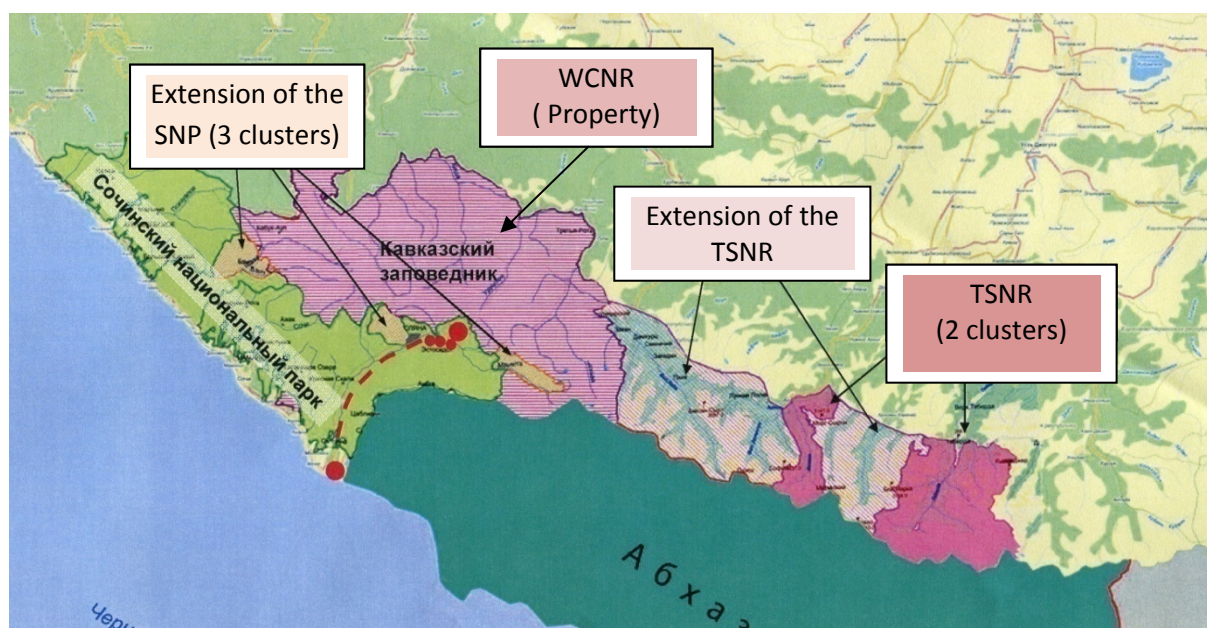
Around 28 000 ha of strictly protected land were added to TSNR, located in Zelenchuksky and Urupsky districts of the Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia (Map 4). The process of transferring the land to TSNR is on-going and it is expected that the delimitation will be performed in the months coming.

A decision was also taken to extend SNP, connecting the two components now forming the park whose the territory was enlarged of around 20 000 ha, in three clusters (Map 4). Both decisions were taken as a compensatory measure to mitigate the impacts of the Olympic facilities in particular on SNP.

The Mission commends the State Party for these important decisions. The extensions of SNP and the connectivity to TSNR, create a consolidated cluster of protected areas in the Western Caucasus and therefore will strengthen the overall integrity of the property.

The Mission further recalls the proposal made by the State Party of extension of the property to include TSNR as a serial extension, which was deferred by the Committee because of the lack of connectivity to WCNR.

The Mission encourages the State Party to consider re-submitting a proposal for extending the property, to include TSNR and the new corridor into the property¹⁶.



Map 4 : extension of TSNR and SNP (Source : MNRE).

¹⁶ In terms of the Operational Guidelines, the proposed extension will be considered a major extension and require that a new nomination be prepared. However the documentation does not need to be as extensive as a nomination for a new property because the values for which the existing property was inscribed will remain the same. The required 'new nomination' should include a detailed map of the new boundary, and focus on how the extension and boundary modification will enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property;

The State Party also informed the Mission on the on-going reintroduction programme for the Persian Leopard into the Caucasian Mountains (Pictures 7 and 8). Two animals have been acquired from Turkmenistan and two more from Iran. The mission was able to visit the holding facility, where the animals are currently getting accustomed to their new environment before starting a breeding programme. A reintroduction of the species in the Caucasus is envisaged in the medium term, based on the offspring of the breeding centre.

The Mission notes that a reintroduction of the Persian Leopard to property, from which it disappeared before the inscription on the World Heritage List would further add to its biodiversity value. It notes that the creation of a large protected area cluster is necessary to guarantee the success of the leopard reintroduction project and to obtain a minimum viable population of leopards in the long term.

The Mission encourages the State Party to continue on developing this project and strengthening its scientific baseline to optimize its success, with the support of IUCN and other external specialists. A clear detailed scientific concept of this project in line with the international standards and requirements for reintroduction of species should be elaborated.

The mission notes that the realization of a large mass tourism programme in or too close from the protected area complex, as seems to be under discussion (see 3.4), would affect the integrity of the newly created cluster and certainly compromise the success of the leopard reintroduction.



Picture 7 – Leopard project centre facilities
(Source : Mission).



Picture 8 – Male of leopard coming from Iran
(Source : Mission).

4. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List under natural criteria (ii) and (iv) (currently criteria, (ix) and (x))¹⁷.

The 2008 mission assessed the status of the OUV of the property and noted it was impressed by the conservation status of various natural ecosystems, including the high mountains, plateaus, valleys and lowlands. It concluded that the Property retains its OUV, which lies in the isolation and undisturbed status of its natural ecosystems, which has allowed for on-going ecological and evolutionary processes to proceed unimpeded. It also noted that there were no indications that key wildlife species were lost or decreased since its inscription and that it still hosted a large number of threatened and endemic species.

¹⁷ IUCN Evaluation report, March 1998.

The mission concludes that this situation has not changed since 2008 and no significant negative trends were observed during the visit.

However, the 2008 mission noted serious concerns relating to the integrity of the property as a result of different development pressures. While some concerns have been addressed since 2008, in particular in relation to the impacts of the Olympic Games, anthropogenic pressure is still increasing in some areas inside the property, where logging and tourism activities are still being undertaken. These threats to the integrity of the property must be addressed urgently.

Proposals for mass tourism developments around and possibly inside the property are of particular serious concern to the mission. As mentioned by the 2008 Mission, the property is ecological linked to the surroundings areas that guarantee the maintenance of the ecological services and the evolutionary processes essential for its integrity.

The mission considers it therefore urgent to ensure the preservation of the nearby very sensitive areas and to finalize the establishment of a buffer zone around the property. In addition attention should be given to promoting the sustainable development of the whole region, so that the ecological processes in the Caucasus are preserved.

5. IOC AND WORLD HERITAGE

The 2008 Mission recommended that IOC be invited to pay more attention to the World Heritage properties throughout its Olympic activities.

The Mission was informed that IUCN and IOC met at least twice ; however, the discussions were focused on Sochi 2014 and no concrete progress seems to have been made to date to better address the World Heritage issues during the Olympic processes in general.

As recommended by the 2008 Mission, the World Heritage Committee should invite IOC and through it, all members of the Olympic family, including the bid cities and bid committees, to ensure the preservation of World Heritage properties by taking all measures needed to effectively prevent and minimize the adverse direct and indirect effects of the Olympic Games on World Heritage properties.

IOC should be invited to ensure that the preservation of World Heritage properties is addressed adequately from the beginning of the bid process. Further work is needed by IOC to develop principles, guidelines and requirements to take environmental issues into account, in cooperation with the relevant international organizations.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mission concludes that the State Party has been able to make significant progress since the 2008 Mission and has made noteworthy advancements in the implementation of its recommendations of the 2008 Mission. In particular, the following achievements need to be noted:

- reducing the impacts of the 2014 Olympic games ;
- preparing the overall management plan of the property ;
- developing efforts to establish a buffer zone in the South and to delimitate the property.

The mission team considers that the OUV, for which the Property has been inscribed on the World Heritage list, was not in danger at the time of the mission.

However, while the overall integrity of WCNR is considered good and while it could be further strengthened through the corridor to TSNR, the Mission remains ***very concerned about the integrity of the Nature Monuments and Nature Park as well as of the Northern buffer zone and the preservation of Lagonaki plateau*** which are part of the property and which are threatened by planned or existing development activities.

Furthermore, the mission team is also very concerned by reports on the proposed development of mass tourism activities and large programme, around and possibly inside the TSNR/WCNR complex that would drastically reduce the expected benefits of the new created ecological corridor, linking the Western and Central Caucasus and ask the World Heritage Committee to pay a particular attention to those issues. In this sense, the State Party should be required to provide the Committee with all detailed appropriate information and data on the project on tourism in Caucasus, presented at the last economic forum, in St Petersburg, late June.

Finally, the Mission stresses the need for the urgent and full implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 Mission on those issues.

In the light of the above assessment and in follow up to the recommendations of the 2008 mission, the Mission team makes the following recommendations to the State Party :

Before the 35 session of the World Heritage Committee

1. Immediately halt all infrastructure developments which are affecting the integrity of the property (), in particular in the Nature Monuments, Nature Park and northern buffer zone situated in the Adygea Republic. This concerns more specifically tourism and road infrastructure, in particular:
 - a. halting all further works on the road to Lunnaya Polyana and ensuring that traffic is strictly regulated and will not affect the integrity of the property
 - b. ensuring that the "Biosphere Centre" is used for management and research and monitoring or visitor purposes only and not converted into a recreational facility
 - c. checking whether new roads and facilities constructed close to Lunnaya Polyana and at the bottom of the Lagonaki plateau are located in the property and if so, take immediate action to stop these works;
2. Abandon any plans for recreational use and development of the Lagonaki plateau, Mt Fisht and Mt Oshten areas. In this respect, the State party should the Committee with all detailed appropriate information and data on the project on tourism in Caucasus, presented at the last economic forum, in St Petersburg, late June and on its expected impacts on the property as well as on the new created ecological corridor linking TSNR and the property.
3. Stop logging activities, including so-called sanitary cutting, in particular in the Nature Monuments, Nature Park and northern buffer zone situated in the Adygea Republic, rehabilitate the logged areas and monitor their recovery;
4. Finalise urgently the exact definition of the geographic coordinates and legal documentation of the boundary of the property and the establishment of a buffer zone on

its southern boundary and submit an updated map of the property to the World Heritage Centre;

5. Establish a coordination body for the entire property, to ensure the implementation of the overall management plan, and develop and implement operational plans for its implementation;

Before the 36 session of the World Heritage Committee:

6. Establish a comprehensive programme to monitor the impacts of all Olympic facilities and tourism facilities on wildlife population trends and movements around the property and ensure continued cooperation and consultation between the Sochi 2014 organising committee and the Reserve authorities;
7. Upgrade the protection regime of the Natural Monuments and Nature Park, either by including them in the Strict Nature Reserve, or by ensuring that all development activities in contradiction to their World Heritage status are prohibited;
8. Develop an overall sustainable tourism strategy and comprehensive plan for the property and adjacent protected areas, privileging low impact tourism activities which can be developed without affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;

The mission team also recommends:

9. Complete its designation a strictly protected corridor which will link the property to the Teberdinsky Strict Nature Reserve as soon as possible, and to consider submitting a proposal for the extension of the property to include both these areas;
10. Consider addressing the issue of overall management plans, management frameworks and management standards for all natural World Heritage properties in the Russian Federation composed of federal and regional protected areas through a national law for the management of natural World Heritage properties that meets the State Party's obligations to the Convention;
11. Strengthen the scientific baseline of the leopard reintroduction project in cooperation with IUCN and external experts and provide the World Heritage Committee with a clear detailed scientific concept of this project in line with the international standards and requirements for reintroduction of species.

The mission also recommends the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to:

1. Invite IOC to develop principles and guidelines to enhance the preservation of the World Heritage properties throughout the Olympic activities, in cooperation with the relevant international organizations.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1**PROGRAMME OF THE MISSION****17 May**

08H25 Departure from Geneva / Paris
 19H30/22H00 Arrival at Sochi via Moscow
 23H30 Arrival at Radisson Hotel (Krasnaya Polyana)

18 May

10H00 Meeting with MNRE, MFA, WCNR and SNP (review of the main conservation and management issues)
 14H00 Lunch
 15H30 Meeting with stakeholders (NGOs, Olympstroy, SOCHI 2014, Adygea Republic representatives, Gazprom, ...)
 18H00 Return to hotel

19 May

09H00 Visit of the Olympic facilities (Gazprom complex) and meeting with Gazprom representative
 12H00 Lunch
 13H00 Visit of the Leopard reintroduction facilities
 15H00 Meeting at the WCNR headquarters (collect of information, data and documents)
 18H00 Diner with MNRE, MFA and SOCHI 2014/Department Environment

20 May

09H00 Visit of the property by helicopter
 12H00 Lunch
 14H00 Further discussions with MNRE and WCNR on management issues
 18H00 Return to hotel, preparation draft recommendations

21 May

06H50 Departure from Sochi
 08H50 Arrival at Moscow
 11H00 Informal meeting at the MNRE
 12H00 Lunch
 13H00 Audience with the Deputy Minister and other officials
 14H30 Return to airport
 19H25 Departure from Moscow

ANNEX 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MISSION

“To assess the State of Conservation of the Western Caucasus World Heritage property and progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN monitoring missions” (Decision 33COM 7B.29).

In particular, the Mission will assess the following key issues :

- a) status of the constructions and planned constructions in view of the organization of the Olympic Winter Games to be held in Sochi en 2014 and their impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. These include the construction of access roads through the property, construction on the ecologically sensitive Grushevy range as well as other facilities ;
- b) development of different tourism facilities such as in the Lagonaki Plateau, Mount Fisht and Mount Oshten areas, South Krasnaia and others and progress in the development of a comprehensive tourism strategy which should address potential impacts on the OUV of the property ;
- c) status of different planned and on-going road construction projects, including road construction in the Adygea Republic ;
- d) progress in the finalization of the delimitation of the property, including the internal zonation and the buffer zones, measures to strengthen its management and legal protection and the preparation and implementation of a management plan for the property ;
- e) other conservation issues currently affecting the property, in particular illegal logging and other illegal activities and measures in place to control them, as well as other conservation issues such as the on-going wildlife monitoring activities and the leopard reintroduction programme.

The Mission will :

- a) hold consultations with the Russian authorities at federal, regional and local levels and relevant all other stakeholders, including the Sochi 2014 organizing committee, “Olympstroy” State Cooperation, tourism operators, local and national NGOs in assessing the progress made in relation to the recommendations of the 2008 joint UNESCO/IUCN mission and the relevant decisions by the Committee ;
- b) based on the results of the above mentioned assessment and discussion with the State Party representatives, update the recommendations of the 2008 monitoring mission, including a time frame for their implementation ;
- c) propose additional recommendations to the Government of the Russian Federation and the World Heritage Committee to further improve the conservation and management of the property ;
- d) Prepare a concise mission report in English on the findings and recommendations of this Monitoring Mission following the standard format.

ANNEX 3**DECISION 33 COM 7B.29**

The World Heritage Committee,

Having examined Document World HeritageC-09/33.COM/7B.Add,

Recalling Decision 32 COM 7B.25, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),

Urges the State Party to resolve as soon as possible the issue of the legal protection regime for the property, delimitation of its buffer zones and regulations concerning buffer zones management;

Encourages the State Party to increase control and patrolling of the property to discourage illegal activities within the property and to increase awareness-raising and the involvement of the local communities and stakeholders to ensure that appropriate legal protection is enforced;

Notes with satisfaction the assurance given by the State Party that no development within the property or the buffer zone will take place;

Requests that the State Party provide results of its monitoring activities including the 1999 - 2008 comparative wildlife study;

Regrets that the State Party has not provided any maps indicating the location of installations for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games and other infrastructure developments in the property and in the SNP adjacent to the property;

Requests that maps and detailed information be provided on the location and an assessment of potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property be provided before any construction begins and encourages the State Party to ensure that the Olympic Games and related infrastructure development do not threaten the property;

Further requests the State Party to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is taken into account in the Environmental Impact Assessments and that these documents, including maps are made public and that mitigation to any threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are incorporated in the planning of all infrastructure and tourism development activities neighbouring and within the property;

Requests furthermore the State Party to review the plans and programmes relating to the 'South of Russia 2008-2012' Federal Target Programme together with plans and programmes of the Krasnodar Territory, Adygei Republic and Karachai-Cherkess Republic to ensure compatibility with the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;

Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2010, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations of the 2008 World Heritage Centre / IUCN mission

and on the additional concerns raised above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010;

Finally requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission to carry out a timely assessment of progress in implementing the above recommendations before the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2010.