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Central and Eastern Europe

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Building Capacity in Wetland Biodiversity Conservation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

Report of Workshop 6
Management Planning for Real: **Latvia 3 – 9 May 2004**

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1: Workshop Information

1.1: Workshop location, host and attendance information.

Location: Riga, Sigulda and Jurmala Latvia.

Date: 3 – 9 May 2004

Hosts: Latvian Fund for Nature

Attendance: There were participants from 7 countries as follows – see Annex 1 for details of names and addresses.

Estonia (3)
Latvia (3)
Lithuania (2)
Poland (3)
Russia (5)
United Kingdom (7)
Netherlands (1)

1.2: Project Background

The overall project objective is to help key individuals from Poland, Russia and the Baltic States improve understanding and practical skills in the management of wetland habitats and to exchange information and ideas on all aspects of management planning for Protected Areas with colleagues from the UK. The project is lead by a consortium of leading UK conservation organisations - English Nature, the National Trust, RSPB, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Wildlife Trusts - and *EUROSITE*.

This is a report of the sixth and final workshop which was held in Latvia and considered management planning, stakeholder management, and monitoring/recording needs for the management of five important Latvian wetlands as well as reviewing, through presentations, the products from each of the participant countries of the last three years.

2. Workshop Activities

Monday 3 May - Riga.

Welcome to attendees from Estonia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and the UK by the Latvian team.

Tuesday 4 May – Riga.

Introduction by Ivars Kabucis

The Latvian Fund for Nature (Latvijas Dabas Fonds (LDF) – see www.ldf.lv) was established in 1990 by a steering group of ten people. The idea of establishing such a foundation came about because in Latvia there were then no professional non-governmental nature conservation and research organisations. LDF was founded with the aim of developing a project to protect rare and endangered species and natural areas, and, by attracting financial support, to provide for the implementation of such a conservation project. In the initial period of activity, the main emphasis was on protecting certain species (such as black storks), but with time, as experience was gained in formulating and implementing projects, comprehensive nature conservation planning of Protected Areas became the fund's main priority. The LDF now produces 5 or 6 plans per annum for nature conservation areas including military sites and advises extensively in Latvia on management that will benefit nature conservation. The LDF has also produced generic management plans for habitats and species groups such as mires, coastlands and orchids. There are 15 permanent staff and some 135 staff are employed on a seasonal basis for a wide range of functions from hands on management, interpretation and scientific work.

Session 1: Review of where we are

The overall programme and the progress made to date were briefly reviewed. All participants agreed that substantial progress had been made in gaining further understanding of management planning methodology, in particular the processes available for stakeholder involvement, their application for protected area management and the objectivity required for monitoring and audit purposes.

Three integrated stages in management planning for Protected Areas had been recognized from the outset of the project and had been considered in depth by participants during previous workshops. They are:

1. The why, what and how of management plans – a rationale for deciding what should be in/out of a plan, its format and what process options there are for production.

2. The who and how of stakeholder management – how to identify stakeholders that are key to the Protected Area and how they will be dealt with and what potential difference/benefit their full involvement can make.

3. What should be recorded and monitored - what information at what level of detail is needed by whom and for what purpose. How do you know if you have been successful, what lessons may be learnt from effective feedback and basic information needs.

This workshop was designed to:

1. Finalise the management planning work that has been undertaken so far in each of the different countries building on these principles for presentation in the workshop during the week. The presentations were competitive with prizes for all reflecting the content of the plan, its quality and linkage to the work undertaken in the project. All the presentations made are provided as Annex 2 (CD) to this report – see Contents above.
2. To further consider monitoring and audit aspects especially monitoring programmes.
3. Identification of what you will do next and follow up options arising from the project for each country some of which might prove suitable for further funding from Darwin.
4. Any personal comments/observations on the way the whole project had worked.
5. In addition the workshop was asked to consider and comment on the new draft Eurosite guide to Management Planning prepared by Eddie Idle and Tim Bines based on the work undertaken throughout the project and also to consider how best it could be used in each country.

Session 2: Presentation - Lithuania (see CD provided as Annex 5)

The first of a series of presentations by each country during this meeting was made by Darius Stoncius on the work he is doing in Lithuania. He described the Cephkeliai Strict Nature Reserve of 11000ha which is in the southern part of Lithuania bordering and extending into Byelorussia and which is surrounded by other protected areas. The nature reserve is supervised by the local administration.

The whole is a mire complex with linear mineral islands surrounded by pine forest and inland sand dunes. This is one of the most intact hydrological mire systems in Lithuania and is sustained by its natural hydrology – to date there is only one artificial drainage ditch which is not now functional and which has had little impact on the natural system. The surrounding area outside the reserve has interest for example the fish ponds to the west which are the main feeding grounds for sea eagle. There are 15 distinct habitats five of which are priority habitats under Natura 2000 and which cover hundreds of hectares. Plant, beetles, birds (Great Snipe, White tailed eagle, Corncrake) and mammals (Lynx, Wolf and Beaver) are significant species on the reserve- new species continue to be found (e.g. Cypripedium calceolarius).

There is a long cultural heritage stretching from the Stone Age through the Bronze Age to the modern day. The local population - living in or near the area - is dominated by pensioners and only 26% of the population is employed in work.

The current human influences with greatest impacts are mowing/grazing/fire and there is cattle grazing both in the mires and raised bogs. Natural and human induced fires

have occurred over a long time and are traceable in the underlying peat layers. Burning is part of the traditional land use for cranberry – reflected in local place names. Fires were however frequent and uncontrolled until the strict nature reserve was declared. Since then grazing, hay making, hunting and berry picking have also been prohibited etc. except for limited areas. A border control station with Byelorussia is being planned following the recent accession of Lithuania into the EU.
The constraints on effective management are that there are very few active graziers and cows are usually in single figures on any given holding. There are real dangers of one match fire management getting out of control when this could be a useful a management tool.

What is the problem?
Species requiring open conditions are declining rapidly as trees and scrub encroach due to the lack of grazing proceeds. This will mean that some of the features for which this area has been designated will decline – the main objective is therefore to maintain favourable condition and the key question is to convince stakeholders of the management needs and find ways of encouraging their action.

Preliminary proposals (See presentation)
Two zones of strict protection have been advised by the Director which is in conflict with species maintenance for which low level proactive management is required. There are real opportunities here for retention and enhancement through careful management and persuasion of stakeholders. The protected habitats in red would be kept those in orange and green enhanced by effective management.

From the project Darius has found the following most useful:

- Meaningful monitoring – especially to plan to only collect that information which is useful.

- Stakeholder management techniques – this was the richest part of the project for him personally – especially with reference to identification of any problems and how to drive the solution – these concepts were new to him.

- Information centre development and how the information is organised and the way in which it is presented to the non-expert.

Questions/comments
1. What is happening in Byelorussia?
There is an inventory project moving forward but the site has been drained in part.
There is an opportunity for co-operation and joint management planning.
2. Mgmt plan implementation – has it started?
Yes the plan lasts for 5 years and will be finished this year
There is need for the purchase of machinery and then restoration activities (removing invading woodland) can begin.
3. Are there species which require large undisturbed areas?
Several of the protected bird species depend on large open and undisturbed areas – the area is so big it is difficult to control disturbance effectively.

4. Given the age profile of people who live there can you get more interest from younger people in grazing animals ?
With the entry into the EU support may be possible and the issue can be presented as a socioeconomic opportunity. This is an example where depopulation and lack of active management is a threat to biodiversity. However the sandy soils are sensitive and offer little grazing, so the whole needs to be managed very sensitively.
5. As the site is dependent on management are the stakeholders aware of these needs and involved in the development of the plan?
Yes - they will be informed later on when we have a green light from the ministry about what the plan says. However we expect little active interest from residents as they are mostly pensioners and we also have additional difficulty in gaining politicians understanding.
6. What have Byelorussia done so far?
I haven't seen yet their latest plans and haven't participated.
7. Are the EU agri-environment schemes appropriate for the management needs?
We have yet to find out.
8. Is this resolvable given the techniques you are using?
The changes in the surrounding ecosystems have been great and may well yet affect the site both directly and indirectly – the whole site is dependent on ground water and this is unsolved in relation to the hydrology.
9. We are doing what scientists always do – dealing with details! Can we ask who the stakeholders are?
The Ministry of Environment and senior scientists – we have to convince them of the serious threat from the lack of management. We need to use the management plan as a communication tool so its presentation is a key aspect here. We suggest that you need to:

1. Agree importance of place
2. Agree problem or get the info needed to agree the problem
3. Do not look for a solution and do not strive for solution until you have agreed the problem.

10. There are two features of EU importance – the raised bog and bog woodland – the raised bog will turn into bog woodland if not maintained – so that raises the question of how do you strike the balance? It seems that the priority must be given to deciding on the amount and distribution of raised bog but there are no absolute ways other than the general principle of managing on an ecosystem function basis and precise management is not possible.
11. In the UK there may changes in management – how do you get stakeholders to agree – changing here bring cows and grazing and mowing as opposed to a strict keep out regime. There is need to think about the process – what makes things change – national/local drivers. The key point is that throughout world the identification of the problem is the key and should involve stakeholders.
12. It takes money to change with an honest expression of the issues, and ensuring a sharing of problem. The Lithuanian Government now has FCS to meet too and that will need careful and subtle management of that group of stakeholders.

Session 3: Field visit 1 – Jaunciems Nature Reserve, Riga.

This reserve on the shore of Kisezers Lake was visited with Ms Ieva Rove, Project Manager for the Latvian Fund for Nature.

Introduction

The Jaunciems Nature Reserve (a Natura site), close to Riga, is a coastal lake reserve within the city boundary consisting of a vast area of floodplain grasslands, marshes, and reed beds. The reserve extends over 335 ha including the 215ha Lake Kisezers and was recognised in 1993. An ancient castle mound within the site forms a significant landscape feature. Key features of the site include:

- Rare and protected plant and bird species.
- Rare and protected meadow biotopes.
- Cultural and historic value features
- Relief forms connected to the transgression of the Baltic Sea

The key issues associated with the site are characteristic of many nature reserves The planned management activities were described for the lakeshore and wetlands. close to conurbations and the LVF has a range of current and planned activities to reduce their impacts. Key issues outlined include the:

- Definition and recognition of the boundaries of the strict nature conservation area.
- Number of private owners (73) each looking to undertake different management leading to further fragmentation.
- Uncontrolled recreational activities on shore and on the water.
- Fly dumping of domestic waste and building materials.
- Erection of buildings without permission.
- Changing the natural relief through construction activities.
- In some places the management is too active whilst in others it is too passive – both resulting in lower biodiversity.
- Lack of sewage treatment leading to eutrophication.
- Lack of organised angling.

In 2003 the Latvian Fund for Nature revised the management plan looking to solve these problems within the reserve and the adjoining area. The revised plan, which divides the restricted nature reserve area into three separate parts beside Lake Kisezers, was submitted to Riga City Council in March 2004 for approval and a response is expected within this year. However even with approval of the City Council the plan cannot be fully implemented as funds to do so are limited.

Wednesday 5 May

Session 4: Field visit 2 – Gauja National Park

We were welcomed by Martins Ziverts (Deputy Director of the Gauja National Park and were then guided round a part of the National Park by Valdis Pilats the Gauja National Park Manager.

Introduction

The Gauja National Park lies 50km North-east of Riga with the city of Sigulda at its heart. The Park covers 91745 hectares – a large area for Latvia. The National Park is largely an agricultural landscape with small villages and has been divided into five zones for management purposes the most important if which are nature reserves and restricted nature areas. It focuses mainly on environmental protection but is also used for educational and leisure purposes. The area has been well known to tourists for hundreds of years and the main attractions are the towns of Sigulda, Cesis and the special reserves of Turaida, Araisi and Ligatne with camp sites provided at Gauja, Amata and Brasla.

After independence in 1918 the National Park was established and extended after World War ll. The current National Park is the first National Park in Latvia. It is very intensively used by tourists and this requires active management of visitors and an appropriate infrastructure including nature trails. Gauja is a key centre from which one of the main trails leads. Before the infrastructure was put in place there was litter and frequent small fires but now camp sites have been established which have helped with this problem. In 1991 when Latvia became independent of the Soviet Union under the land reforms former land owners had their property returned to them and now some 2/3 of the Park is privately owned. In 1998/99 a new Park plan has been produced under new legislation with the help of Denmark. This involved a joint Latvian/Danish team and extensive discussions with local communities (there are 15/16 local counties in the Park) and local government especially tourist managers. On production of the plan public consultation was undertaken. The local people were not active and not interested as they did not see that the plan would affect them nor did they depend on the plan. However ideas were gathered in this way through the consultation and fed back into the plan which is now waiting on Ministry approval. In this Nature Protection Plan there is a main strategy and this is then followed by detailed plans for selected areas. In general the plan outlines the goals that it is hoped could be reached and what that means in terms of practical delivery. From 2000 there is further new legislation for national Parks and a new management plan is required - all of the National park will be one Natura 2000 site.

Any plan is seen as being prepared for the National park staff but also for the local community who are responsible for landscape protection. However now that the collective farms have been removed and land returned to private hands these owners may have been moved to Siberia under Russian rule and may now have returned to Latvia but to a different part. This makes the implementation of management very

difficult as even if they live nearby there is little infrastructure/machinery to enable the management required to take place. Currently EU subsidies are being considered to help with this issue - possibly 20 Lats /hectare may be available for management. One of the issues that has had to be faced is the frequently changing legislation which itself causes changes in management planning so management planning is seen here as a continuous process.

The centre at Gauja was first established in 1976 and in 2001 the new current centre was developed. It has been designed to show aspects of wilderness and the cultural heritage of the Park. Gauja National park includes the primeval valley of the Gauja river which together with its tributaries forms an ancient landscape. On the banks of the river Gauja and its tributaries there are large Devonian rock outcrops forming cliffs and caves. Forests cover 47% of the park and in total there are over 900 plant species, 149 birds and 48 mammals. There are 500 historical/cultural monuments ranging from castle mounds, castles, manor houses, water and wind mills as well as numerous archaeological monuments.
There are some 80 staff working in the Park with a budget of ½ to 1 million Lats of which 1/3 is from the government and the remainder obtained from the marketing of forest products. Of the 80 staff 23 are environmental inspectors.

Stop 1. Ligatne Nature Trail Information centre
This was originally established in 1975 to acquaint visitors with natural features including the mammal and plant species characteristic of Latvia. The centre has been used as a centre for releasing animals rescued from across Latvia that were unable to look after themselves. There is a charge for visiting the centre of 1 Lat. The centre uses the local myth of witches associated with the steep sandstone cliffs to interpret nature. There are c 5000 visitors a year who enjoy the features displayed ranging from a giant wooden xylophone to wooden mushroom stools etc – all are natural items that provide simple messages about the natural environment. The concept was produced during the management plan work and a range of diverse interpretation materials have been produced. Some 20 interpreters have been trained at Gauja mostly from government institutions and currently the Park is looking to train a further 20 from tourist companies that bring visitors to the area.

Stop2. River Gauja stop.
Some owners are now with National park encouragement positively managing the river as a game fishery and are charging for fishing on a daily/weekly basis. This leads on to the forest/tree species trail.

Stop 3. Farmland area
This was a former forest/farmland area which had been neglected but which is now being managed again with hay mown and removed. There are opportunities in the future to pay locals for cutting the area and making hay from it. There are some 50/100ha managed in the National Park in this way. The real benefits in maintaining these open areas for a wide range of species – plants, invertebrates and birds – was described.

Stop 4. Sandstone cliff
This was a sheer cliff area - well signed/interpreted - overlooking a bend in the River Amata (tributary of River Gauja). The cliff had been formed by the river undercutting the

cliff in the 1930‘s but the river had been diverted away to prevent further undercutting. The cliff was reached by a steep path provided with steps installed and renewed

annually. The most popular activity for visitors from Sigulda are canoeing and cycling – hiking is not yet a popular activity. The number of visitors went up in the 90’s with open borders – especially from Sweden - and the number is expected to grow even more now that Latvia is in the EU with visitors expected from Germany, Holland and the UK. The visitor plan is provided and adjusted dependent on the number of visitors by the National Park who provide camp site locations. The entire infrastructure is provided by private suppliers who are starting to request higher standards of service provision – showers and toilets etc. There are currently two fully private camp sites in the National Park.
The growing issue of wild boar and red deer grazing on farmland, their control and who should exercise that control, was briefly touched on.

Session 5 – Hotel Sigulda Review of the day

5.1 Eddie Idle welcomed Nicole Nowicki (Director General of Eurosite) who was pleased to be able to come to this workshop having attended the second Darwin workshop at Wicken Fen. Nicole outlined how important this work is and its effects both personally, within organisations and the different participating countries. She was looking to know what is helpful for participants in the future and for examples of good practice so that Eurosite could consider options for the future based on practical ideas – the bilateral model developed in this Darwin project may be useful again in new ways which we may be able to derive from this project.

5.2 Comments on the last two excursions were asked for:

- Today was very interesting and showed new aspects of stakeholder. management and was more informative than the first site as we have seen similar issues from sites at the second workshop.
- We are too strung out in our field visits and not all the group are then able to participate in the various discussions.
- We saw real on the ground ecological management today very comparable to Russia.
- The Management Plan was interesting because it was so short.
- The Visitor centre – did not go on at length about biodiversity – talked about witches which led to biodiversity – that was a useful way of gaining interest.
- Lessons here too about wildlife enhancement – whilst ensuring retention of interest.
- What difference does this visit make for you? Maybe next time you manage visitors you would do something differently using the ideas from this visit.

Session 6 – Country Group working

Work in country groups

1. What are your views on monitoring
2. Write on a piece of paper three or four sentences on your thoughts/feelings about this project.
3. What will you do if this project ends now?
4. What would be the best thing to do in your country if we were to continue

Selected Feedback:

- *"I've got now new skills identify key elements of planning (stakeholders etc.)".* Ivan Mizin – Ugra National Park, Russia.
- *"Using my experience from the project I am planning to publish an article about it and prepare materials to Moscow centre of Environmental Education. The project must not be stopped!"* Natalya Shpilenok - Ugra.
- *"Full project results are not yet seen".* Valdimarts Slautskins - Latvia.
- *"What was special about this project was opportunity to see how theory is used in every-day work in different countries".* Janis Kuze - Latvia.
- *"The project change my thinking about Management Planning. I now understand it as a dynamic never-ending process. Igor Szakowski – Poland.*
- *"New fruitful contacts and connections. Getting new experience and methods for using in daily work." Dmitry Katz – Russia.*

Thursday 6 May

Session 7: Presentation 2 – Poland (see CD provided as Annex 5)
The work undertaken in Poland was presented in three parts – introduction, stakeholders, monitoring, lessons/development opportunities from Darwin.
1. Introduction and stakeholders.
Czarnocin is a coastal lagoon site in the south east Baltic – see CD of the Management Plan for Czarnocin and presentation provided on a CD attached to this report).

The area was in hay production area until World war ll when it then became a state farm. Eventually production ceased and there was no active management for many years. It is now a Natura 2000 site – see Czarnocin Management Plan page 27 for Objectives. For the purposes of developing the Management Plan the stakeholders have been divided into:
Authorities – the influential regional authority/ local authority. The Maritime office – as this is a coastal lagoon site their activities are critical in affecting the Natura 2000 interest, the Drainage Board – who are responsible for pumping water into the site (which meets nature conservation needs) and pumping it out (which is what agricultural interests seek).
Local people who are seen as key in this work (formerly working on the State farm until it collapsed when they became unemployed and now do casual work), neighbours (state forestry, hunting bodies, Nature Conservation bodies – all have an interest in this terrain and need an input and understanding of how it is managed),Universities (especially for monitoring e.g. with University of Stetin and the State Committee for Research and Science), and tourists and holiday makers (who range from active bird watchers and walkers to more passive holiday makers – there is need to manage them all effectively).

2. Monitoring and recording
This has moved forward considerably in the last few months. Looking to use monitoring for decision taking in a cyclical way making it realistic, effectively resourced and very focussed. Currently there are plans for monitoring/recording of vegetation, water levels and volume, priority bird species – these are seen as important from the funding viewpoint and enables opportunities to be taken if the numbers and trends are known. Fresh water mussels – these are a good indicator of the quality of the fresh water. Local people – and the growth in green tourism so tourism indicators have been developed.

3. Lessons and development
We want to see and explore new ways of working. We consider that stakeholder assistance in managing sites is very important so we have selected three sites in Poland – the Upper Narew valley, the Lagow Beech Forest, and the Kaczawjske Mountains in Silesia.
This is a newly funded project (draft application is provided on the CD attached to this report) under the Phare programme with the objective of building support for Natura 2000 sites and in turn to building implementation for nature conservation delivery.

In other words we see using the management plan development as a stakeholder management tool.
We have started by setting up stakeholder work groups to identify the most important problems and take forward an exercise to draft a management plan through stakeholder activities linked to an effective communication plan.
For each site in these workshops we have gone through three steps:
the first step has been to recognise and identify natural values – what is the site, what are the species, what are the species needs - and not how to conserve each species on each site.
The second step is to identify the overall nature conservation needs on each site by looking across the requirements identified in step one.
The third step is the integration of the management needs with the views of the local people.
In this way we hope on each site to develop a group of stakeholders (primarily the local people) who have identified and are aware of the conservation interest and the needs and have prepared for a detailed planning process through the preparation of a draft management plan. We consider this will then lead to real products including further requirements. The key sections of the management plan can then be elaborated – these will identify new projects as well as identifying any knowledge and skills shortfall by comparison with current levels of ability etc. This can then be used to identify the nature conservation needs to a wider group of stakeholders.

Questions and comments

1. Have you solved the problem of graziers on site? Yes we pay in arrears for the work needed – this has helped with the chronic alcohol problems we have had in the past. We have about 20 local people/graziers who are now beginning to understand what is needed.
2. Is there an emphasis at all on the tourism aspects? Yes, many tourists visit the area and there are opportunities for income possibilities for both the site and local people.
3. For the new project how do you make clear with stakeholders the interaction between groups? We haven't got that far yet – we are still meeting the first group of stakeholders and trying to convince them/gain their interest in the nature conservation values.
4. Are the projects working on real or hypothetical aspects? They are a factual information gathering process largely and the work is for real with a clear short time frame
5. What is the time frame? – we look to finish the project in 2005 and those involved will be influencers and communicators to others.
6. DGXl are looking for key examples of working with stakeholders from which all involved with Natura 2000 sites can learn so this project could help.
7. How long did it take to produce the Czarnocin management plan? From start to presentation stage – we already had already some early drafts - say 6 months. This is quick for us and there will be three more plans produced in this year – unlike many other years! Our emphasis has switched to stakeholders and using time for/with them.
8. What was your biggest problem and how did you overcome it?
The identification and analysis of stakeholders and the production of the plan to deal with them.

9. Why were you successful/what was it that made it a success? The quality and work at these workshops and the benefits that have arisen in clarifying the way forward. We have been open to suggestions and determined to succeed!
10. For the monitoring programme can you tell us how the selection of factors has led to funding possibilities? Its one of the areas where people have huge opportunities to link work to monitoring and funding through simple clear figures which appeal to potential funders e.g. priority species need to be selected which are of a quality which will show benefit.
11. Do you know what data and information you need for the monitoring work? Yes – bird numbers, location, water levels etc – to influence decisions on e.g. wader populations and which leads to answering critical questions on water level management.
12. What is happening around this site – is this built into the management plan? No it not at present and we need to think about this. We cannot decide what happens there as well at the present time. It raises the question of whether the site is sustainable of itself – there are areas that may need to be added to enable the site to be effectively sustained.

Session 8: Darwin Project progress
This was an exploration of the Darwin Project progress - where we have got to/what we have done? We have looked at:

1. The why, what and how of mgmt plans
2. How to identify and deal with stakeholders
3. Objective monitoring and review

Yesterday we looked at some aspects now we come to the point where we need to have from each country:

1. Your final management plans
2. Your monitoring plans
3. Views on how to deal with the new guidance that Tim Bines and Eddie idle have drafted.

Exercise on the new draft Toolkit - some questions to answer:

1. What changes are needed to the new toolkit?
2. What is missing from the new toolkit?
3. What would the cost of translation into each (5) language be?
4. Can one of your organisations be a focal point?
5. What examples can you provide which could be useful?
6. And for each country:
    1. Who controls initiates Management Planning in your country?
    2. Who sets the standards?
    3. Who approves Management Plans?
    4. How does the financing of management planning work?
    5. Are the principles of monitoring – see guidance – page 26 – being followed?

Feedback on the new Toolkit:

1. A simple and clear explanation of the linkage to the current Eurosite Toolkit is needed – more than is in the current draft.
2. Its snappy and well focussed but:
   - Diagrams need improvement
   - Boxed text is very useful
   - Diagrams may be a good visual aid?
   - Diagrams give air to the text
3. Flow diagram need closer linkage to the text which needs adjusting
4. Who is it for? Planners/plan writers and/or stakeholders?
5. Need for a summary card of the process.
6. Is it possible to give it to anyone and they understand it?
7. There is a difficulty of exposure of the process to stakeholders
8. 'revealing your hand')
9. The scale and extent of stakeholder involvement is important to make clearer e.g. R. Volga where there is diffuse pollution produced outside the site but affecting it.
10. Similarly the scale/extent of the management plan should be clearer in the guidance.
11. Target groups for the guidance will vary country to country so there is difficulty in expecting similar adoption/implementation for each country – one size does not fit all.
12. The higher up the organisation the influence/effect of the guidance the better the value for money it is.
13. Is it only for the local level or is there need to relate to regional and national levels too – if so how?
14. Further clarification is needed on what scale and level of information is required to enable a plan to be produced.

Session 9: Field visit 3 - Adazi Military Area.

Introduction

A wet and dry heathland site extending over 8000 ha. which was covered by pine woodland over dune heath until the18th century when extensive military usage changed the site to a less wooded and more open heathland. The area has been open to the public when not in military use since 1993/4 when the Soviet withdrew. Of the flora and fauna 25 plants and 15 animals are very rare in Latvia and today it is a Natura 2000 site. The biodiversity on the training area currently reflects the long history of military use.

We were welcomed to the site by Lieutenant Gatis Smiltins, Captain Aldis Grundinskis and Captain Normunds Stafeckis who explained the military base/infrastructure and that this is a mobile infantry training area situated close to Riga so supply lines are easy. The good relationships that have been developed

with the Latvian Fund for Nature were explained and which started in 1998 with a baseline survey to facilitate the production of a management plan. Since then regulations within the military area based on that work have been developed – these explains to any soldier how to behave whilst in the training area.
The management plan is renewed every five years through survey work to not only measure progress – to see how well the military management is doing but also to measure and learn from any changes. The training area is now used more intensively with some 270 training days a year so changes may be apparent but from the last survey there has been little change which is viewed as successful management of the area.

Stop1 Lake side
The lakes are very important at this site for their diverse wildlife even on a Latvian scale. There is therefore need to show soldiers what to do for nature conservation – for instance previously battle trenches were left open but now they are carefully filled in after use which brings a nature conservation /landscape benefit through stopping wind blow as well as helping with Health and Safety. The military have been removing the former Soviet infra structure but there is still some left and are looking for ways to tidy up the area economically.

Tree invasion by birch and pine is the most significant issue especially after the use of the area in Soviet times for tank training which helped keep it open. All kinds of management for this are being explored including cutting, burning and grazing. Burning is particularly difficult because of the need to control fire on the dry heathland. The main objective is to make nature conservation management of benefit to military training. The management plan has been changed as it has been implemented. On the internet there is available through the LDF page some simple issues and summaries of all the plans are also available as Press releases. When there is live firing we advertise that via the press and the media. We are doing nothing but we are doing a lot!

The management plan was made with help from Sweden and the US and now there is ongoing cooperation with Norway especially over noise protection. Barriers have been placed around some areas to stop physical car access on the days that the area is open to the public. The beaches of the lake shores are also affected by trampling and fire lighting for picnics. The local community on the other hand want to see recreation facilities with open access and housing.

The Lake Lieluikas and the Lake Mazuikas were formed from previous coastal lagoons 8000 years ago. At their centre they are 7/8 metres deep. The Lake Mazuikas is the richest and the plan is to decrease the recreational pressure on it by encouraging the public to access the least interesting lake from the wildlife viewpoint. The interest of the lakes is largely centred on the aquatic communities near the shore with Littorella and Lobelia species. These need clean clear shallow water and are easily affected by swimming activities.

How do you know you are being successful? We have a lot of information which shows that we are not harming nature. We have agreed with civilians a common way of working. PR is seen as being very important –the water lily badge is the local community badge and we wear it with pride. We have changed the situation in the last three years from one where garbage and people were a problem to a well run situation. A key factor in this has been the consistency/continuity of the military personnel on site.

Stop 2
Open areas formerly used for tank training with shell holes. Here there are problems of birch/pine invasion and control. The water level has dropped due to beavers damming the streams higher up and preventing water flow downstream which has led to a drier dune heath with birch and pine invasion in places. In some of the sand dune areas the thin peat layer is easy to destroy through vehicle action and even troop movement.

Stop 3
We stopped beside a small stream which feeds a large lake before reaching the sea. At the end of the 19 century a canal was dug which was expanded in Soviet times. This has affected this stream and the areas now adjoining this canal are drying out because of this drainage and there is nutrient loss from the peat due to more active decomposition. We are aiming here to create a small free flowing stream again with higher water levels restored though we think this may increase the area of birch regeneration.

Stop4
Sand dune ridge viewpoint
You can see from here our aim to keep 1000ha open i.e. free from trees, in about six blocks. 'I enjoy the problem not the solution' has been an issue for us in putting management in place.

Friday 7 May

Session 10: Field visit 4 - Kemeri National Park.
Introduction
A habitat and species inventory was undertaken by the LFN for this area in 1991 and has been developed continuously since as a joint funded project between Germany and the Latvian Government. In the past the area was maintained for the quality of the sulphurous water as this was used for health purposes. The National Park, established in 1997, now covers 38,000ha of which 50 sq km is raised bog and associated small lakes forming a classic crescent shape which is expanding as the peat surface grows and cracks. A 3 km board walk provides the principle public access across this area. There is an increasing problem of fly tipping here which has necessitated the provision of locked pole bar gates.

Stop1

An aerial photograph was helpfully, and convincingly, used to show that historically the bog area was a lagoon which had progressed over time into marsh and then into bog. The peat is 10m deep with the highest point 17metres and the lowest point 9 metres above sea level. The bog is currently expanding into the surrounding forest. Drainage is a key issue but there has been little overall exploitation except for forestry which drained part of the bog. The National Park authority is now trying to block those drains which are not in private ownership. There is a small amount of peat exploitation and again most of these ditches are now blocked to raise water levels for peat bog regeneration.

Stop 2 Bird hide

From the bird hide after walking the board walk we saw a number of key species including breeding wood sandpiper, golden plover, curlew, whimbrel, black storks, cranes, white tailed eagles and osprey.

The southern part of the National Park is strictly controlled because of the beaver population. The land owned by the State is directly managed in hand by the Kemeri National Park and there are some 25 staff (5 in a Life Nature project). The western part of the National park is now largely in private ownership.

Stop3 Information centre

We were welcomed to the centre by the Director of Kemeri National Park who explained that the National Park covered 38000ha and that there were 2900 private owners in the National Park with the remainder owned by the state. As a consequence effective stakeholder involvement and management is very important. He introduced some of the key members of staff including:

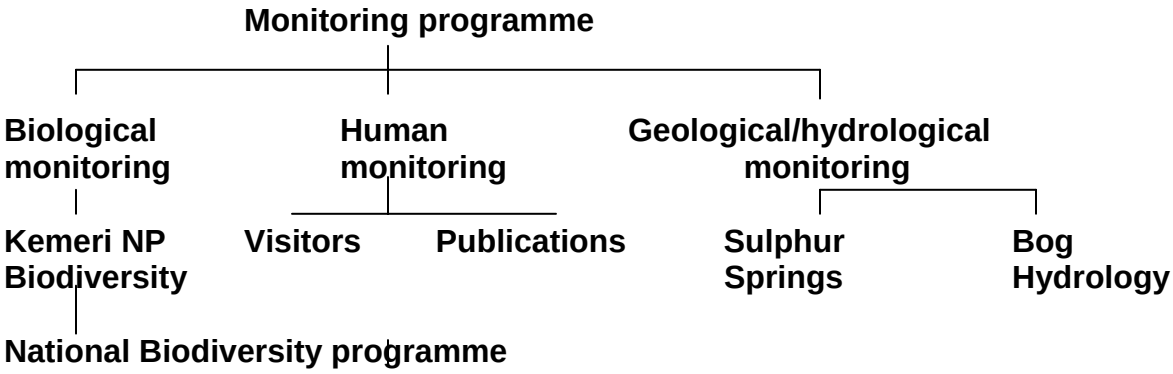
Head of Environmental inspection ……..Gints Starts
Head Forester……Janis Poga
Special Nature School Head……Anita Perkone
Site Manager……Aivars Tomaseevics
Monitoring Specialist……Viesturs Vintulis

The Management plan for Kemeri was produced in 2003 with the support of the Danish Government and runs until 2010. The activities required have all been listed in a prioritised table and to assist in sorting out the key issues as the plan itself is large and unwieldy. Some 70% of the activities described are being implemented through the Life Project with the remainder using the National Parks own resources. When the Life Project finishes there will be need for further financial support to replace it and the National Park are currently looking for funding. They have found that the current plan needs updating every two years. It is copied to the Ministry for the Environment and to the Municipalities in the National Park as information about the natural resource. This National Park has a special Steering Committee team made up of the Ornithological Society, Latvian Fund for Nature, Forest service and Municipal representation. The committee are allowed to change the plan to a certain extent.

Presentation from Viesturs Vintulis Monitoring Specialist

In all there are seven programmes in which the NP has a role but all are mainly carried out by others with the information being fed to the NP.

Monitoring has been arranged in subject areas as shown below:



There is a limited marketing strategy aimed at those who arrive at the visitor centre.
Hydrological monitoring started this year including the installation of piezometers.
There is 40 years of biological data monitoring from 1950. The Black Stork populations have been monitored for 20 years and new rare bird species are being added to the NP list – indicators of change? – these include Eagle owl, Tengman's owl, pygmy owl, white bodied woodpecker. The Latvian Ornithological Society has recently started monitoring the commoner bird species and the NP is a partner in this work.
Reptiles, amphibians and mammals are recorded at five year intervals.
Bats are well recorded with three species common in the NP – Pippistrelle, noctule, Northern and Daubenton's has been seen once.
A specialist botanist is monitoring the plants and their locations and recording information in the form of small plans.
There is also habitat monitoring e.g. in relation to raising water levels.

Comments on the morning

- The features we saw in the NP are a long way from the car park which raises the question of how do people know its there? In the coming week a new information sign will be put up in the car park.
- The board walk was much admired as a simple and appropriate access route which was well maintained.

Session 11: Presentation 3 – Russia (see CD provided as Annex 5)
The session was introduced by Dmitry Katz who explained that there are a wide range of sites across Russia serving different broad objectives from nature conservation to landscape and recreational needs designated under different national and local legislation. They range from National parks to Regional and local sites. Some of these sites are very large others relatively small. Many of the sites are uninhabited and planning assumes a different meaning since plans are not usable and in any case the current political situation with regard to nature conservation – planning and implementation is very fluid. We present here three different plans – for Russky Sever (Russia North National Park), Ugra National park and Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve.

Dmitry then presented the Russky Sever plan.

Russky Sever National Park
See Russky Sever presentation on CD accompanying this report.

This national park is twelve years old and covers 199222 ha. The objectives for the National park are written in law and have to be carried out. The territory is easily accessible to among some of objectives easy to achieve. Agriculture production has collapsed following the demise of the USSR when there were extensive collective farms in the area. There is therefore a need for financial support to enable land management for nature conservation. Some 45% of the National Park is owned by the State and the remainder is in private hands. The territory has been zoned from no use to traditional uses with real opportunities for extensive management. 20,000 people live within the National Park.
The Global Ecological Fund (GEF) provided funds in 2001 for the production of a Management Plan. Since then there has been a real effort put into sorting out priories to enable maximum results with the resources that are available. The Darwin project has been of considerable help in identifying stakeholders and tackling them to develop a common vision and goals and enable partnership working. In particular the monitoring regime discussions have proved helpful.

Ugra National Park
See Ugra National Park and two other presentations on CD accompanying this report.

The development of a new Ugra National Park plan started at the same time as the Darwin project so the work undertaken in the project has a direct and immediate influence on the Park plan. The Park has six Districts and currently 28 landowners all of whom have been involved at various stages with plan preparation. The numbers of landowners involved is expected to increase by c. 10% because of an increase in land ownership. The plan approval process requires six District Heads and the regional governor to sign the plan off.

One of the main objectives was to work with stakeholders and environmental education has been used as a key element of stakeholder involvement as it provides access through those who are in education to a wide range of varying age stakeholders. The lack of facilities in the National park has been a real issue with a major drive to increase the facilities ranging from educational centres to low key picnic provision etc. There is need for an ongoing transparency for those who enjoy and have an interest in the work that goes on in the national park to gain their support.

Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve

See Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve presentation on CD accompanying this report.

There are three core areas for the study of natural processes and a number of buffer zone areas which are all managed as a natural area in the Astrakhan region. The Volga delta which forms the reserve features is very influenced by the river Volga itself as well as other rivers upstream of the delta that feed into the Volga both in terms of quality and quantity of water flow. It has proved very difficult to manage this problem because of the very large number of stakeholders and the lacjk of control over them as they are outside the boundary of the reserve. There is need for a national level approach and plan/policy to improve the conditions to assure the condition of the reserve and its aquatic features.
Within the reserve the primary objective is to maintain the biodiversity in the estuary and delta for the full range of species in the ecosystem including the important migratory and resident bird populations (pelicans, cormorants, herons, sea eagle, osprey). The main threats to the reserve which have to be controlled are poaching and reed burning linked to access for the 500, 000 people in Astrakhan.

Questions and comments

1. What do you see as the next steps in Astrakhan?
We are and will be using the principles that we have developed in the Darwin project in Astrakhan over the next three to four years to develop and adopt a new management plan.
2. There are enormous issues of scale for Russian planning but for monitoring what is the one big lesson for each of you?
In Astrakhan the big issue is what is happening outwith the site boundary as this is an aquatic system we are reliant on the water quality and quantity fed down the Volga. In Ugra we feel like islands in a sea of stakeholders and they are our big issue – how to keep on top of their thinking. In Russia North we are using a system of State monitoring which is not what we want. We don't have the resources to do all that we want so we need to develop indicators for monitoring to help with rarity, science and anthropogenic issues. The monitoring needs vary across the range of sites designated – for reserves we need to measure change and use science to help us. In the National Park we need to monitor people and their activities and numbers while at the regional and local level economic issues are the monitoring key.
3. In Dmitry' s table what can you do – what percentage funds do you spend on monitoring?

We do some monitoring through volunteers so its difficult to pin down the true cost – we have also tried to get special funds for monitoring but in general 5% of the table would be spent per annum on monitoring.
In Astrakhan we have had additional monies from oil companies to help and some 4% of our budget has come from that source. We also know that we need tourist activity data especially for the fish levels in the delta – we can see that there are effects but we need data to convince the stakeholders.
4. The monitoring of funds is very important and I liked what you have shown us – getting the best value for money is very important. This linked with the monitoring of stakeholders gives you some powerful tools though we all need to be careful what we call stakeholders who s different agenda to ourselves! Are there other things that are important?
Yes there are many other things - for instance in Astrakhan we have an increase in wild boar – not because of what we have done inside the reserve to create good conditions but because there are bad conditions outside the reserve so the boar are using the reserve as a refuge. So we need to be careful in attributing cause and effect when making management decisions.
5. We have heard about enough space for people and enough space for nature – who decides what is enough? In Russia we hear of 3% devoted to nature – is that enough should there be linking networks of some sort to provide both for nature and people? Yes but there are difficulties just in managing what we have but in Moscow there is an ecological network approach hat has been running some time.

Session 12: Presentation 4 – Latvia (see CD provided as Annex 5)

The presentation was made by Janis Kuze

We started by hearing about the basic information about the Kemeri National Park. The whole is a Natura 2000 site and is the largest bog area in Latvia. A management plan has been produced for the site with funds from the Danish government whose experts worked with the Kemeri National Park to produce the plan. The forest area in the park is not natural having been replanted and the Kemeri National Park is currently looking to get these poor areas more biodiversity by selective thinning and cutting.
Stakeholders of key economic importance include forestry, municipalities, hunting, fishing, and tourists including bird watchers. Currently plans are being considered on ways to improve bird watching facilities within the National Park and for the general interpretation of natural values.
In the plan there is a large table of prioritised activities required within the year and this is updated annually.

The main problems working with the plan have been to:

- encompass the whole site into one plan as the area is so large and diverse.
- decide when actions have been completed sufficiently well.
- manage the continuous re-prioritising of actions.
- raise awareness and gain acceptance especially over forestry management where the land is in private hands.
- resolve stakeholder conflicts e.g. between hunters and birdwatchers especially on the lake where hunting has now been banned.

The plan has been implemented largely through the LIFE fund which has provided some 60% of the funds required with the remainder coming from the LVF (Latvian Environmental Fund – Latvijas Vides fonds).

The plan is at present only partly implemented with the following as the top four key priorities:

Priority	Action	Comment
1	Restoration of the bog hydrology	Life fund is being used to achieve damming of cut peat areas and blocking of drains to flood areas and regenerate wetlands.
2	Restoration of the River Slampe	Restoration of banks and water flow.
3	Management of Lake Kanieris	Rebuild and maintain sluices and island management.
4	Meadow management	Negotiation of a lease for the most valuable meadows and appropriate manager through a local farmer.

In the future the Kemeri National Park is looking for a major new Life project which would enable four square kilometres to be effectively managed as a single hydrological unit. They are keen to try out different management ideas in different places to gain the confidence to apply these more widely. The overall objective is to derive simple plans which can be readily applied. There is a two way process with natural processes and utilisation of natural graziers. There is a need to control invasion on a large scale alongside restoration both of which would enable the whole site to managed as a natural place.
The stakeholders do not have the same view as those seeking nature conservation management and there is danger of non acceptance leading to a walk out so there is need for transparency and openness in order to gain buy in. The recent history of the site is missing because of the lack of records from the soviet period. This makes the evolution of the site as a consequence of recent management difficult to understand.

Questions and comments

1. How do you proceed with land acquisition – owners must be in part at least waiting to see if the value of the land will go up? Yes this is true – we can't buy everything we would like but we have already bought the most important nature conservation areas.
2. If you are purchasing land then you loose the chance to change that stakeholders view.
3. The chance to buy land is time related and often there is a changing pattern of ownership over time.
4. It is often difficult when you are close to managing a site that it becomes difficult to separate priorities from your own personal agenda. To some extent that is true but the financial constraints in this case have concentrated our activities to priority areas.
5. How does the data you obtain from the monitoring programme translate into decisions and who makes them? The selection of key indicators is the principle issue as information collected can, if carefully selected, feed back directly into management. The corncrake is a good example of this other species such as the black stork can't be linked so readily to management prescriptions and actions. We are looking al the time for breeding success for the indicators we select and for ways of ensuring minimum disturbance e.g. through a zoning approach.
6. How do you decide what to monitor? Its different for different things – we have:

- a national programme which fulfils the EU Directive's requirements
- indicators for management purposes
- other Latvian priorities to fit with national data collection needs

We are though concerned about being clear over cause and effect i.e. so that our work is decision led and we need to work hard at making sure we have the information we need to make the right decision. Why things are changing may not always be related to the apparent cause!
7. It is important to restore natural processes – are some places more important than others and are the principles of extensive area management any different from managing large areas? The important thing is to keep habitats in their natural range though there are cultural issues arising over Natura 2000 sites especially in Western Europe. In principle it is the same approach for any large or extensive are and we

need to remember that local people are often the drivers of change to ecosystems and that the boundaries of ecosystems are especially important.

Saturday 8 May

Session 13: Field visit 5 – Lake Engure National Park

Introduction

We arrived at Lake Enguri National Park and were met on the coast by Roberts Silins (Director), Inga Racinska (responsible for implementation of the management plan and funded through the Life programme) and Kaspars Goba who was making a promotional film about the park.

Stop 1 Coastal Marsh

The first management plan for Engure National Park – which extends over 1900ha - outlining the main features and factors affecting the area was prepared in 2000. In 2001 a Life project was established to implement management at Engure and this finishes in September 2004. It concentrates on regenerating coastal grazing marsh which has in part become scrubbed over by alder and willow through a lack of traditional grazing and mowing. The work involves removing scrub by hand, extensive fencing to keep stock in the area and the re-introduction of cattle. Thirty years ago there would have been 30 cows grazing this area and within the National park there would have been horses and goats. The Latvian Fund for nature look in the longer term to introduce Latvian Blue cows to the marsh which are a traditional Latvian breed and able to graze on the low nutrient vegetation. The costs involved are high with fencing at one Lat /m and 150/250 Lats per Latvian Blue cow or 350 Lats per Charolais. The project aims to start with 5 cows and build up to 40. It is hoped to find a local grazier though there is a grazing skill shortage as many farmers have moved away. The Director had managed to find two farmers in the village where he lives through his local network who are responsible for the stock. This is not currently an economic proposition as the number of cattle is so small and the only product is meat but it is hoped that in the longer term cattle grazing would become viable. In addition it is hoped that a reed cutting/produce market may be developed. Thos however requires capital equipment and the local people believe it is too dangerous to use tractors and heavy machinery in the reeds. There is a plan to provide free visitor car parking. Overall the aim is to make the whole project self sustaining but to achieve this requires an initial investment of c. 25000 Lat per annum.

There are more than 400km of coastline in Latvia and only a small extent of coastal grazing marsh – some six sites – with brackish water and these support a mix of halophytes and were traditionally grazed very heavily producing short open swards. These grazing marshes are stepping stones of high biodiversity and with better management the biodiversity is more stable supporting large populations of wading birds. The area has bird and botanical monitoring in place.

The new management plan has a supervisory group which is made up of stakeholders but feedback to those outside this group has proved very difficult. Stakeholders involved include the land owners, foresters and the Environment Protection Board. It has proved best to write to each stakeholder and/or speak to them directly to gain their interest in this project. An attempt was made to gain

stakeholder involvement through advertising for public meetings but that failed with no-one turning up. Even with face to face contact involvement is low – stakeholders don't know the area is in a Nature Park and don't see the need for protection of the landscape or wildlife. They rather see the actions taken being a total ban on their free use of the land.

Stop2 Orchid trail

We then proceeded via the 3.5 km Orchid Trail to the Engure Lake. The trail is unique providing a wide range dune related habitats from open water through flushes to meadows and dense forest. It provides visitors with a well maintained viewing point for a wide range of species including orchids.

Stop3 Lakeside

Like the costal grazing marsh the lakeside has been overgrown with scrub (including large bog myrtle bushes) and the lake itself was lowered in 1840 in attempt to generate more agricultural land. The management here has been intensive with a fencing of a belt of lakeside land and scrub clearance to enable grazing by eight Konic horses – seven mares and one stallion for the last two years. These have been obtained through the Nature Arc project and four young animals from this breeding group are due to be returned to Nature Arc after three years. They have already cleared extensive areas alongside the lake margin which is rapidly becoming an open reed community. The horses are able to out winter with the provision of simple open shelter and hay. The long term objective is to generate open wet grassland alongside the lake. This largely because wader meadows have been lost to agriculture in Latvia and therefore there is now a drive to generate open wet grassland as a replacement habitat.

Session 14: Presentation 5 – Estonia (see CD provided as Annex 5)

Three presentations were made by the Estonian participants;

1. Tagamoisa Natura site

Velho Volke introduced the work he had been doing on Tagamoisa which is a coastal Natura 2000 site situated in North West Saaremaa. The management plan work had started three years ago after the site was selected primarily because of the globally threatened population of 2,800 Steller's Eider ducks over wintering in Uudepanga bay but also for a wide range of rare European plant and animal species. In total there are 21 of the Habitat Directive's Annex 1 habitats present in the site including limestone cliffs. The site is in danger from three aspects – afforestation, port development as a stop over for cruise ships and a lack of appropriate management by local inhabitants. The management plan has been very significantly influenced by the Darwin project and has ten pages with a detailed project plan. Forty of the actions in that plan were implemented last year. The two actions that are most important in relation to stake holders are:

- encouraging appropriate local management action e.g. hay making.
- making stakeholders aware of the features and interest of the area in a European context.

Personal communication has proved critical and it is important to have people on the ground to influence stakeholders – it may only take one person to act as a catalyst for change. The land ownership patterns are complicated and after much work 30% of the site ownership has been defined – this is a key aspect for on the ground management, enjoyment and understanding. A separate vision document for the site has been prepared by a new resident stakeholder which provides an effective communication tool.

The management plan is now with the Environment Ministry waiting on approval but there is one key stakeholder who is very influential and fears that his livelihood is at risk. This may cause further delay and require further work to resolve. There is need to move to the point where it is clear that an income can be derived from effective nature conservation management as well as tourism without harming the natural resource.

2. Rannametsa-Soometsa nature reserve/SPA

The presentation was made by Marika Kose.

See the presentation on CD accompanying this report.

Marika presented an overview of the management plan of the reserve and explained the steps taken to involve stakeholders. The work was part of a four year Life Fund Project which has one year left to run. The site has a dune ridge as a backbone with bogs, woodland and 1000 ha of coastal meadow grazing. In total the reserve includes 31 of the habitat features listed in The Habitats Directive and 12 of these are priority features.

The work of the local inhabitants in managing the site is critical in order to maintain the natural resources in a sustainable way. When the Life Project finishes there needs to be sufficient enthusiasm to drive the work forward with the support of subsidies.

This Darwin project has shown the need for positive involvement of stakeholders and despite doubts, concerns and resistance of colleagues, who initially considered

that a stakeholder approach, had little to offer nature conservation, Marika has persisted in implementing a stakeholder involvement approach.
She gave us several examples of ways in which she has developed support and action for nature conservation management with stakeholders.
The 1000 ha of coastal grazing meadow needs intensive management by relatively large numbers of local farmers using cows and machinery. The management of this large area has been neglected in the recent past and was the first part of the overall management that was tackled. In order to enable effective grazing feeding areas were fenced off with new fences and bridges to enable access both for stock and machinery. This was undertaken after encouraging participation in seminars and in one to one discussions. These enabled the history of the place – a lesson taken from the work at Wicken Fen – and its relative value in nature conservation and historical landscape terms to be explained. A book was produced which described this history to encourage interest and has proved a great success amongst local people. This building of community spirit and interest in the area took much time but has resulted in recreating an identity with the area with the local people proud to belong to this community.
To further emphasise its value and importance visitors were invited and taken to meet stakeholders. This was supplemented by working camps bringing people of all ages from all over Estonia to help with specific management tasks. It was found that young people in particular were key visitors and the more children that came to the area the more it was perceived as being important.
All kinds of stakeholders have contributed to management e.g. the local fire brigade who helped supply water for Natterjack toads and this fed naturally into the media.
Amongst the visitors to the project were the EU who were, eventually, convinced by the economic arguments of the need for subsidies and would remember their visit because of a very large cake baked to celebrate their visit. This helped in ensuring that the national stakeholders were convinced too when subsidies were restored for the area following these lengthy discussions.
As a result of the Darwin project water has been recognised as a key issue and work is underway to raise water levels by 50cm. This has again meant involving stakeholders on a longer term basis.
Work is also underway with the hunters who are important stakeholders. Following the presentation of a collaborative plan the management of the woodland part of the site has been agreed and will be followed up by a visit with key stakeholders to Finland to talk about options for nature conservation management on site in Estonia.

3. Monitoring

Because of time constraints only a very short presentation was made by Indrek Tammekänd who described the monitoring work that was underway to:

- establish the requirements on the coast at Rannametsa-Soometsa nature reserve/SPA with the specific objective of bringing favourable conditions for waders.
- restoration of rare species such as eagles and black storks through establishing productivity which appears to be innately low.

Questions and comments

1. How did the new stakeholder at Tagamoisa fit in with your work? He is a keen and young Frenchman who works with young people in the area and with the municipality. He is able to reach and influence people who would not otherwise be involved. As a resident owning land he has proved an ally in contacting the target groups of stakeholders that he has an interest in.
2. Did you adapt his proposals? No, we simply took what he developed and used them for our purposes with his agreement.
3. How sustainable is the work at Rannametsa? Involving stakeholders is as I said essential for management and monitoring with their involvement in feedback so that they can be proud of what they have achieved. It looks sustainable in that there is very great enthusiasm and locals are keen to do more.
4. Using the history was a good idea and it has stimulated effective communication and helped with establishing this new identity for all the locals.
5. The use of language is important – how did you explain to farmers in their language? We simply joined in and talked in plain language looking to remove concerns/fears and looking to engage their interest and enthusiasm at individual and group level. We found that the locals are very smart and at least equal scientists in gaining practical outcomes once these have been recognised and accepted for delivery. It is most important that practical tasks are identified and undertaken and that work is not intellectualised.
6. It would be very useful to have these examples of practical work in a Natura site on the Eurosite website.

Session 15 – What next and conclusion

1. For the new guidance we need to:
   - provide ongoing examples from experience on the ground
   - a helpline for the guidance perhaps by Eurosite
   - an improved monitoring/review and audit section
   - clarity over financial and personnel management

2. What next in your country?
Three countries had very specific ideas that they saw as needed theses were:

2.1 Estonia
- we would like to keep the Darwin team together and grow something from what we have done.
- We need to ensure real value fort money from what we do.
- We need to get organisations to grow effectively on a form base.

2.2 Russia
- in Astrakhan we need a demonstration monitoring programme for a Protected Area. In Russia generally we need to get the Ministry of natural Resources to accept the need to adopt a stakeholder approach and then train a core of protected area managers who can extend thinking across Russia.
- we think it is better if we meet outside the UK.

- it is very important that we move now to a clear focus on and specific programmes for each country.

2.3 Poland

- we want to spread information/learning from the Darwin project to make use of stakeholder planning across Poland. This would need to involve managers of NGOs, scientific experts, local workers – those who are preparing management plans as well as a network of workers in protected areas.
- we need to have effective feedback processes to learn from implementation of management plans as we go along.

3. General points made about 'where next?' were:

- We need to know soon if we can carry on through this or a similar project as we don't want to set anything up and not then deliver. We have worked well together for three years and can continue to develop this thinking for real benefit.
- We need to involve more people from other organisations to ensure that we achieve wider understanding.
- There is need to ensure that the expert management plan writer is fully involved so that we can develop and test new techniques.
- The way of working has been successful and productive with the function of the joint workshops setting the broad framework with specific in country working thereafter. There is need for cooperation in the future especially with regard to the designated European Directive sites.
- We want to be part of this club and share our learning in this way but it is about work and not a holiday.
- Very important to use theory and discussions not only in mp work but in every day work and learning by doing is not everybody's favoured style.
- It is important to keep our group together and use the 'collective mind' we have including an opportunity to resolve personal matters.
- The Internet could usefully provide additional resources in countries (Russia) with for example sample Management Plans.
- We need to maintain feedback to the new guidance and collect/collate information about our general problems across 5 countries and decide what the differences are and what is common so that we can move forward in problem solving together including economic aspects.

Concluding remarks

Eddie Idle concluded the workshop with thanks to:

- All of the people from the five countries for all you have contributed and said and for staying with it so enthusiastically over three years.
- The UK facilitators for their individual commitment to the project.
- Latvian colleagues for the wonderful arrangements made for this successful workshop.
- English Nature for their administrative and moral support throughout the project.

Nicole Nowicki on behalf of the Eurosite Board said:

- The Board of Eurosite has been following the work undertaken with considerable interest. She will ensure that the work we have just done is reported to the forthcoming Eurosite Board .
- This workshop has been the best organised that she had been to and was in her view a great success.
- Finally she thanked Eddie Idle and Tim Bines for all the work they have done in producing the new guidance – an extra product of the Project – and for all their unseen background work over the last three years.

Report prepared by Tim Bines, June 2004

Annex 1

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