

Youth Participation in Protected Area Management in Rodna Mountains, Romania

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NEWSLETTER

Project Description

Project objectives:

- *Baseline and monitoring systems established*
- *Management plan developed and implemented*
- *Experience evaluated, model developed and promoted*



Lychnis nivalis – Opașul Munților Rodnei - © Claudiu Iușan

This project represents a collaboration between the **Environmental Change Institute (ECI)**, University of Oxford, and the **Administration of Rodna Mountains National Park (APNMR)**. It originated in the desire to develop a participatory management plan for the Rodna Mountains National Park (PNMR), through the involvement of all stakeholders, especially of students from schools adjacent to PNMR.

Student participation, an original and essential element of this project, will be accomplished through seven "Darwin Clubs – Friends of PNMR". The project will employ environmental education that is practically orientated

and sustainable, through various activities designed and implemented with the clubs. Above all this, the project will facilitate the transfer of knowledge

to the Romanian partner and will build local capacity through training in: participatory biodiversity inventory and monitoring, adaptive management techniques, the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS), tourist guiding skills and fundraising.



Some members of the project implementation team - © Alina Szabo

This project employs an original approach to protected area management; therefore, all methods used will be carefully documented and will be developed in a model of regional significance.

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This project will run for three years between 2005 and 2008, and is financed by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Darwin Initiative. The Romanian Forest Administration, RNP-Romsilva, and in particular Directia Silvica Bistrita-Nasaud, are kindly acknowledged for their financial contribution.

www.darwin.gov.uk

www.rosilva.ro



The Rodna Mountains National Park



The map of the park - © APNMR

The Rodna Mountains National Park and Biosphere Reserve is located in northern Romania, spanning two counties: Bistrita-Nasaud and Maramures. The park was established with the main purpose of conserving biodiversity at

all levels (genes, species, habitats/ecosystems); in addition, the integration of conservation objectives with local community development goals is sought, taking into account traditional cultural characteristics in the area.

PNMR has an area of 46,399 ha, of which 3,300 ha represents the Pietrosul Mare scientific reserve, and 50 ha form the Piatra Rea reserve.

Although it was

established more than seven decades ago, PNMR has own administration only since May 2004. The administration, APNMR, are in the process of developing a participatory management plan for the park, for which they benefit from the support of the UK partner through this Darwin Initiative-funded project.

Project Achievements



PNMR was established in 1932 and confirmed through laws 137/1995 and 5/2000. In 1979 it was declared a Biosphere Reserve within the MAB-UNESCO programme.

In May-June 2005 a meeting of the two partners – ECI and APNMR – took place in Rodna, when project calendar was finalised and a Memorandum of Understanding stipulating terms of collaboration was signed.

Priorities for the summer of 2005 were linked especially to achieving objective 1 of the

project, namely establishing baseline and monitoring systems, through data collection on park biodiversity and traditional natural resource use in the area.

Field studies were undertaken by APNMR with students and researchers to investigate butterflies, grasshoppers and cave fauna in the park, while presently a study on

small mammals is being carried out. The results of this research will feed into a database and will inform the drafting of the management plan.



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i. Darwin Clubs – Friends of Rodna Mountains National Park

These clubs were established in schools adjacent to the park with the aim of awakening and/or developing students' interest in, and love for nature, in particular for their native surroundings; at the same time, APNMR hopes that as a result of this project Darwin Club members will go on to become strong supporters of the park and its administration and will

demonstrate in all their undertakings respect for nature and local traditions.

Moreover, it is the aim of this project to offer an organised framework within which students can express their knowledge, talents and creativity in support of biodiversity conservation and for improving livelihoods in their respective communities.



Butterfly researchers in action - © APNMR

Seven Darwin Clubs have been established in schools from Borşa, Rodna, Sângeorz Băi, Năsăud și Bistrița.

Paintings by some of the students from the Darwin Club established in Rodna © Alina Szabo



Members of the Rodna Darwin Club wearing traditional costumes © Alina Szabo

ii. Capacity Building for APNMR

In order to support APNMR with their park resources management activities, a series of opportunities for knowledge transfer from the UK partner have been built into this project.

Hence, Dr. Anna Lawrence held an introductory workshop on adaptive management for protected areas and Dr. Susan Canney introduced APNMR staff to the use of remote

sensing and GIS for protected area management during a week-long workshop. This knowledge will be further developed during the project through courses and practical applications.



GIS training at APNMR's headquarters-© APNMR



Leontopodium alpinum - Edelweiss- © APNMR

iii. Equipments and Facilities

Several books and materials needed to facilitate improved park management have been purchased. APNMR has also been equipped with: a digital photo

camera, a bat detector, GPS units, a desktop, a laptop, ArcGIS software, other equipments will be acquired as they become necessary.

The project was covered in the local and regional printed press and radio — keep tuned for more information.



Rana temporaria - Common Frog-© APNMR

Next Steps

In the following period data collection on biodiversity and natural resource use in the area will be continued with the participation of Darwin Clubs.

In October Dr. Anna Lawrence will convene a

workshop on participatory biodiversity assessment and monitoring for APNMR staff and Darwin Clubs coordinators. Also in October the GIS training will be continued.

In November a meeting of the park's Consultation Council for Administration (CCA) will meet to present and discuss progress on the management plan.

The essential

component of this project is stakeholder participation in the development of the management plan. Therefore, in addition to the CCA meeting, a series of questionnaire surveys and discussion groups will be arranged in order to collect as wide a spectrum of opinions as possible and to understand local and national realities that influence the management of the park



Picea abies with Usnea sp.-Fir Tree with lichens-© Alina Szabo

Partners



APNMR's team has 11 people: park director - ing. Doina Jauca; IT specialist - ing. Alina Hădărău; biologist - Claudiu Iușan; public awareness - ing. Augustin Hădărău; chief of security - ing. Ioan Muntean; rangers -tehn. Ioan Mihali; tehn. Grigore Timiș; tehn. Mircea Tomoiagă; ing. Andrei Coruțiu; tehn. Mihai Lorinț; păd. Alexa Tomoiagă.

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**Environmental
 Change Institute**

ECI have built a reputation in the fields of participatory biodiversity assessment and monitoring and collaborative management of protected areas. This project is led by Dr. Anna Lawrence (project leader) and coordinated by Alina Szabo (project manager); Dr. Susan Canney (University of Oxford, Department of Zoology) is GIS consultant.

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Collaboration



Horses waterfall (Cascada Calor) - © APNMR

Small photos credits:

*1. General view of the park-© APNMR; 2. Iezer Lake © APNMR;
 3. Daffodil Meadow - Saca Peak © Alina Szabo; 4. Cobășel Cave © Florin Rotari;
 5. Myothis myothis/blythii © Florin Rotari; 6. PNMR presentation in Rodna © APNMR*

Please contact us if you are interested in this project and would like to know more about it.

APNMR would also like to use this opportunity to appeal to all those keen to get involved in the project, especially through the science volunteers programme—persons with

experience and knowledge in sociological and biodiversity surveys are particularly encouraged to get in touch



Rhododendron kotschy –Balcan Kotschy Alpenrose Heath-© Claudiu Iusan